

THE
BEST FRIEND

Standing at the

DOOR:

OR,

Christs awakening and affectionate *CALL*; both to Professors and secure Sinners, for Entrance into the House.

In several Sermons.

By *John Ryther*, Minister of the Gospel in
WAPPING.

Cant. 5. 2. *It is the Voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, &c.*

Acts 16. 14. *He opened the heart of Lydia.*



L O N D O N,

Printed for *Fohn Hancock*, at the three
Bibles in *Popes-Head-Ally* in *Cornhill*. 1678.

THE
TEST FRIEND

Standing at the

DOOR

O R

Christ's awakening and affliction
on the CROSS; both to Pro-
fessors and future Sinners
for Entrance into the Holy

In several Sermons

by the Rev. Minister of the Gospel in
WARRING

the Gospel of my blood-shed
the Spirit Open to me, &c.

the Lord's blood in the heart of the Spirit

773:07

LONDON

Printed for John Thomas, at the three
Golden in Poplar-Street, in Cornhill. 1672.

T O M Y

Dearly Beloved

H E A R E R S,

(Whose hearts the Lord
hath drawn out to attend
my Ministry) in, and a-
bout *Wapping*.

My dearly Beloved in the Lord,

SUCH as God hath deeply sensed
with the worth of Souls, and the great
concernments beyond the Grave,
how active and diligent will they be
to obtain a well-grounded security; that
when they come to launch into the vast Oce-
an of Eternity, they miscarry not! And tru-
ly that is the aim and design of this Treatise
thrust into your hands. When I consider the
great trust of the Ministry of Reconciliati-

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on, committed to the Lords Servants, who labour in the Word and Doctrine: Oh how doth it quicken, excite and spur me up to lay forth my Talent, my strength, my self, my All for your sakes! O that Studying, Praying, Preaching, Mourning, Printing, all these, nay any of these, might but prove a blessing to you, to gird up the loyns of your mind, to run so as you may obtain at last, that I may not run in vain, that you may not run in vain; that my prayers and travail may not be lost, and your souls after all not be lost; that you may give an account with joy of all your hearing, and I give an account with joy of all my Preaching: this, this indeed in general, is at present the occasion of my appearing once more in Print for your sakes.

1 Cor. 9.

24.

Gal. 2. 4.

He. 13. 17

I have only a few things to acquaint you with, and a few requests to you, with a few arguments to back these requests, and so I shall commit this small Treatise and you to the Lord, for a blessing upon both.

I. An eminent Providence of God first cast my lot among you: God (I can truly say) chose for me, and when I was under a great suspense with my self, and in a strait, God shewed me where he would have sit down in his work. I waited on God to see his gracious and holy ends, in transplan-
ting

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ting such a Shrub in the Ministry (as I must needs confess I am) from North to South --- therefore I cannot but say, you must be dear to me, because Gods Providence brought me from far to you.

2. The same Providence that brought me amongst you, through grace, hath blessed my Ministry to you ; and hath in some measure given a room and acceptance in your hearts, which I must ever own as a very encouraging mercy, and a token for good (I hope) to you as well as to me : this you have evidenced in your daily and constant, and serious attendance upon the Ministry of the Word, in the expressions of your endeared love and affections to me, in your laying out your selves for the relief of many of the Saints of Christ under wants and necessities, whenever in this long and dark day you have been called upon to such an honourable service and work ; and therefore you must upon this account be always dear to me.

3. The same eminent and special hand of Providence hath kept me amongst you. yea (I may truly say) a strong hand under many difficulties, under some intricacys ; I have lain bid amongst you, when sought for by men ; I have not lived amongst you so long, but have felt some thorns in my sides, some grieving Bryars will grow up every where, yet the Lord kept me and my

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work together, in the midst of you ; and therefore you must be dear to me.

4. Many of you (I hope) are dear to God ; O that all of you were so ! I have had good experience of some of you ; knowing how the Lord hath both called you, and comforted you by his word, and given you a room in his heart, and a room in his House, to grow up before him in further degrees of grace and knowledge in our Lord Jesus Christ ; and must not they be dear to Ministers who are dear to Jesus Christ ? and therefore you must be dear to me.

5. Many of you run through many dangers and are in deaths often, viz. I mean you, who by Calling use the Sea, you and your Relations are often absent from each other ; you are often under fears and hazards at home and abroad : O how often do you part and never meet more ! how often smile when you do return from Sea ! God hath snatched away by death your Wives, or your Children, and they that stay by the stuff at home ; how often have they bitter experience of your deaths abroad ! and if God spare your lives, how often do they set in fears of your Slavery by the Turk ; which is next to death alive, nay a kind of death. For if Israel were said to be in their graves, while in Babylon ; may not you be said to be in your graves in Argier, Sally, or
sent

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sent up to Fez? and truly the sense of such circumstances in this kind many of you are under, hath drawn forth my Bowels, compassions and affections the more to you, so that I think no pains too much, no travel too great for the eternal good of your precious souls.

Now I have a few requests to you that shall read over this small picce.

1. That thou wouldst read it as one concerned in it. Alas! how many read Books from love and sordid principles! some for the Author's sake, and not for their souls sake, nor for truths sake; whereas you should say when you read Books, (the Authors of which you love and esteem) as he did, Socrates is my friend, and Plato is my friend; but Truth is my greater friend. O find your souls concerned with the matter: have I opened my heart to Christ or no? have I heard his voice or no? is Christ gotten any further than the door? am I got above a luke-warm Laodicean or no? have I ever said to Christ, Come in thou blessed of the Lord; why standest thou without? if thou thinkest thou art not concerned now, I must tell thee ere long thou wilt be convinced, that thou wilt be concerned when death and eternity shall look thee in the face; when thy glass is running its last

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last sand; when thou groanest upon the side of the Pit; when thou shalt bid a forced farewell to all the pleasures an bewitching profits of this present life: O then if Conscience be not seared with an hot Iron, O then thou wilt be concerned! I have shut Christ out of my heart, and I am afraid he will shut me out of his Heaven: O how wilt thou then say as one concerned, O that I had opened unto Christ, when, and while he knocked! O that I had opened unto him immediately! O that I had opened unto him, and hearkened unto him in the day I once enjoyed, but now is me now these things are hid from my eyes! O then poor souls be concerned before it be too late: O that you would know in this your day, the things that concern the peace of your immortal souls!

Luke. 12.

37.

Luke 19.

42.

2. Believe as well as read: what is all your hearing, all your reading, all your praying, all your professing, all your running without your believing? you should mingle faith with your hearing, or else it will not profit you; you must mingle faith with your praying, and so ask in faith, or else it will not avail you; so you must mingle faith with your reading, or else it will but prove lost labour. Ask thine own heart (Reader) as thou goest along, O my Soul believest thou what thou readest? dost thou believe that

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Jesus Christ stands at the door and knocks? dost thou believe that Jesus Christ would have entrance? dost thou believe that if thou open unto him he will come in and sup with thee? dost thou believe Christ calls on thee to open to him? dost thou believe if thou open not to Christ now, he will not open to thee hereafter? dost thou believe O my soul, it is but a little while and thou wilt feel what thou now readeſt to be true, either to thy eternal conſolation or condemnation? O that I could ſay to thee, I know that thou believeſt.

3. *Let me request you to pray over what you read. Many read much, and pray little: ſuch never profit much by what they read. To pray over Promiſes and Books, is the way to profit by both: to go from reading to thy knees, is the only way of reading. What a Book in thine hand, and never to this day upon thy knees for a bleſſing? O ſad! you will beg a bleſſing upon your food, upon your Callings, upon your endeavours and lawful deſigns: and what not beg a bleſſing upon what you read, for the convincing, for the quickning, for the humbling of your poor ſouls! how many have bleſſed the Lord for Books they have pray'd over, as well as read over! and how few have found a bleſſing in reading without prayer!*

4. *Let,*

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4. Let me request you to weigh what you read; consider it well; put the Truths you read into the Balance of the Sanctuary when you read them: if they be Gold, see your Gold be weight: alas many poor souls they read, but they weigh not what they read; they take not Truths into home considerations, they do not let them lye near their hearts, they do not lay them to their hearts. Read as the Bereans heard Paul, who searched the Scriptures to see if things were so: they would not take Truths upon trust, no not upon the Credit of a Paul; they were more noble, better descended, more generous, so the word [Corywitege.]

Act. 17. 11

5. Let me request you to read to practise, and not to know: to practise the truths that you read, to reduce all you hear, all you read into practice in your lives and conversations: O then my Beloved, will you be the Epistle of Christ; and O what a mercy! and O what a glory would this be! this is a Peoples comfort, and this will be a Ministers Crown: then may Ministers say of their people as the Apostle doth of the Church of Corinth, Ye are our Epistle written in our hearts known and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministred

2 Cor. 2. 2.

3.

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ministred by, or written not with Ink, but by the Spirit of the Living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshy Tables of the heart. *A Peoples practice and conversations are the best commendations of a Ministers Sermons; and then happiness will be written upon the heads of such a People or Congregation, Happy are ye if ye know and do these things.*

That I may have your grant to these reasonable requests; let me excite and stir you up by a few Motives.

1. *Your everlasting state is concerned in these things, O therefore deny me not. If I should tell you (My Beloved) that your Trades were concerned, that your Familys were concerned, that your Ships were concerned, that your bodys were concerned; O how readily would you give me the hearing! O how chearfully would you bestir your selves; and every one lay diligently about him, turning every Stone to secure these! and alas do not you see your greatest concerns lye in what I press you to? are not the concerns of your souls, of eternity, of a future estate, of Heaven, of Glory to come, far more to be prized and preferred than any of your external or secular concerns? and will you deny me? would you deny a Physician*

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sician, if he requested you to make use of such and such Remedies, or else death would suddenly and inevitably follow? would you be so cruel to your selves? so unkind to him? and must poor Ministers be denied that sue and beseech you that you would work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling? that beg of you to be reconciled unto God? that calls upon you and entreats you to bestir your selves to open to a standing, waiting, wooing, knocking Christ? will not your denial be interpreted one day a denial to Christ himself? can you deny Ministers that entreat you in Christs name, but you deny Christ? they that despise them, do they not despise Christ? and they that deny them, do they not deny Christ? O my Beloved, if you love Christ, if you love your own souls, if you love the Gospel of Christ, if you love me a poor unworthy servant of Christ; O do not deny me?

2. Know this, you must be accomptable to God for the Ministry you have set under; do you think that poor Ministers must be accomptable to God, and you escape? do you think that God doth not record all the Sermons that you hear? it may be you forget them as fast as you hear them, and we preach them; but God doth not so; he that hath bid you take heed what you hear, and take heed

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heed how you hear; doth not he expect an account from you of all you hear? did you come to hear with this frame of heart? Lord I must give an account of this Sermon, of this season of grace, of this opportunity; yea I must ere long give an account of it; now a price is put into my hand, and I must shortly be demanded how I improved it: O would not this make you come before the Lord with more seriousness than most of you do. It is said of Mr. Shepherd, that he used to go up into the Pulpit to preach as if he was to be called to an account when he came down, and that he used to steep his Sermons before they were preached to others, in his own Tears: O that hearers did so, go to hear as if they might be called to an account after Sermons, and did steep the Preachers Sermons in their tears after they were preached.

3. If you deny me, you will repent it to all eternity: will it not repent you that you should shut Christ out of your hearts? will it not repent you that you were deaf to his calls and knocks? did it not repent those of whom it is said, when once the Master of the house is risen up and have shut too the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Luke 13. 24, 25, 26. Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer

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swer and say unto you, I know not whence you are, &c. O shut not out my requests to you ! O let Christ into your hearts, lest you be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven for ever ! O how many souls in Hell are saying, O that they had hearkned to the voice of Christ by his poor Ministers in their day of grace to have let the King of glory in !

4. O deny me not these requests : a little while, and I shall request such things at your hands no more : shortly I shall put off this Tabernacle, and you will hear my praying, my wooing, my preaching voice no more. I know not but these may be some of my last requests to you : I am loath to be denied ; will you deny me, and it may be I never ask you more ? never beseech you more ? poor Ministers you see die fast, Embassadors called home apace ; the breaches you daily see made in Congregations, by taking away their dear Pastors, should be a loud and living Sermon to you : O therefore while I live amongst you, let me see the Lord answering my hopes, my desires, my pains, my prayers, my tears ; in that you keep out Christ no longer ; but that you may by opening to him, and hearing of him, have him come into you, and sup with you ; and so shall you sup with him here and hereafter

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after, and so will you be my comfort
here, and my Crown and Joy hereafter;
which is the prayers of

Your Servant in the Lord
for his sake and yours,

J. R.

Prologue

And so forth
And so forth
And so forth

And so forth
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R E V. 3. 20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door; I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

THis Text is part of the Epistle written to the Church of *Laodicea*; who was now at this time in a very sad Estate and Condition, lull'd asleep in the Cradle of Self-Confidence and Conceitedness: in which Epistle we have these Parts:

1. The Inscription, shewing from whom, and to whom it was written, to *Laodicea*; with a Description of him that sent it, *v. 14.*

2. We have also the Body of the Epistle. In the Body of the Epistle we have these Parts.

1. We have a Disease discovered.

2. A Remedy prescribed.

First, The Disease discovered, (*viz.*) the luke-warmness and self-conceitedness of *Laodicea*, (*v. 16.*) a sad disease, which occasioned severe Threatnings; *I will spue thee out of my mouth*: an Allusion to warm Water, which provokes to vomit; so, this Distemper of theirs was a Provocation to the Lord to vomit them up: as a man that hath taken something, that loadens his stomach, is sick, until he vomit; so, the Lord was sick of this Church, they loaden'd his stomach! O sad Professors and Sinners, that were neither hot nor cold! God in time grows sick.

of such, and will spue them out of his mouth, as matter of offence to him. O Sinner, Professor, what will become of thee, if God once grow sick of thee?

Secondly, We have a Remedy prescribed, (v. 18).

1. Counsel in General : (v. 18.)

2. In particular : (v. 20.) which is in the Text.

The Text is a piece of Christs prescribed Remedy, wherein his readines is discovered to raise up a poor decayed and decrepit Church, that now lay, and I may say, Bed-ridden of that sad spiritual disease of Soul security, and carnal Presumption: and as it is Counsel in particular to *Lacedææa*, so it is to every poor Sinner that is sleeping, and loving to sleep in a whole skin; that lies under mistakes of their eternal States and Conditions, as this poor people did: O how many Souls think, nay say, they are Rich (*viz.*) Rich in a stock of Grace, Rich in Experiences, in their Confidence, Rich in an Interest in Christ, never questioning their Conditions! O, but what is the Judgement of Christ concerning them? can we pass for current with Christ in our own Judgements? And may poor Sinners say one thing, and Christ say another, as to their Estates? nay, did not these Professors do so? then well may poor Sinners do so, if Church-members do so, as in that Case of the Controversie of Justification: but what says the Scripture? so says a poor Soul, O but what says the Lord Jesus? what a confounding thing will this be, if thou say one thing of thy State, and Christ say another? If Christ say thou art poor, a poor mistaken deluded Soul, self-deceived Soul, thou art wretched,

in a wretched condition to all eternity, if in this case thou live and die, Thou mayst call thy self a Blessed happy Soul, and Christ may call thee a wretched, miserable, blind Soul: Thou mayst say thou seest as the Pharisees did; Because you say you see (says Christ): O but says Christ, thou art blind: thou truly seest no excellency in Christ, no necessity of Christ: thou mayst say thou art cloathed with the Righteousness of Christ, and think thou hast put on Christ: O but what if Christ should say thou art naked! O what a sad condition is this, now that Christ passes a Judgement upon them so contrary to their own! If one was naked in a storm, he might make haste to get out of it; but to be blind too, sure such Souls must inevitably perish. If thou Sinner, or thou Professor, shouldst go on in a way of confidence thus smoothly, as *Lavicea* did, and at the last the Lord discover thy State to be thus faulty, thus naughty, as theirs was; O-how dreadfull will this be! O it is a great mercy for God to discover a poor Sinners State to him betimes!

But was there no help for this diseased Church, these poor Souls? was the Case incurable? Is there no *Balm* in *Gilead*? is there no Physician there?

Yea, He makes up a Composition himself for these poor diseased Souls; he draws up the directions, and points out the Remedy with his own hand— *I counsel thee to buy of me gold*: Come unto me and thou shalt have the true riches, the true rayment, the true eye-salve.

And then he seems to hint another intended means of their Recovery out of this dangerous condition (*ver. 19.*) *viz.* his Corrections: O

do not think because I rebuke you, I do not love you : my rebuking is the way to your recovering : The rod is necessary to your recovery ; as a Person in a Lethargy, which we call the sleepy disease, must be cut for it, so must some Sinners : many Professors are like Tops they go no longer than they are whipt. Observe, That decays in Religion and Profession, are often attended with afflictions : so it was with this Church, &c. The rod is very necessary to recover Souls out of the sleepy disease - Gods afflicting is often our awakening. How many Souls have been brought to Christ by the Rod, as well as by the Word ? Can none of your Souls say this, your first feeling acquaintance with Christ was under the rod ? O, but here he prevents an objection; they might now say, God will altogether un-Church us, waste us : O no, you are Children, though under the rod : I love you, though I lash you ; O do not lie under my hand questioning my heart, but be zealous and repent : be zealous in your Reforming w^hat is amiss in you, and among you ; and repent of your luke-warm Neutrality in Religion (viz.) of your Confidence, Conceitedness, Presumption, and Security, which were the great sins of this Church of *Laodicea* : and thus comes in the Text :

Which is a part of the Counsel and Remedy prescribed by our Lord Jesus Christ to poor secure Sinners and Professors ; *Behold I stand at the door*, &c. First, in it we have a note of Attention, *Behold* ; it is used sometimes as a note of Attention, and sometimes as a note of Admiration, sometimes as both, and so it seems to be used here ; Jesus Christ the *Amen* of God, and his faithful witness, had some great matter

to impart to them, and therefore quickens them up by a *Behold*. Secondly, A note of Admirati-
on, to draw forth their Affections as well as
Attentions; it is called by the Fathers, *Notam*
stelliferam, the starry note, alluding to the Star
that stood over where Christ lay. Where-ever a
Behold is fixed, there look for something more
than ordinary.

*This Ecce
(says one)
may be cal-
led the A-
sterisk of
the Holy
Ghost, or
the Bibles
Nota be-*

2. Here is Christ's Acclamation: *Behold I*
stand at the door, &c.

1. In the Acclamation we have,

First, The person, *I stand, &c.* I, the Lord Je-
sus! I the *Amen!* the faithful witness of God! I
the beginning of the creation of God! well may
this Acclamation have a note of Admiration fix-
ed upon the head of it: is not this a wonder,
that Christ should come to poor, miserable,
wretched, blind, naked Souls? *I stand at the*
door and knock! That the King of Glory should
stand at such Doors! That the King should
stand at the Door like a Beggar!

Secondly, Here is the posture; that is three-
fold:

1. Standing, *I stand.*

2. Knocking, *and knock.*

3. Calling, *if any man hear my voice.*

1. Standing is a posture of patience; it is the
posture of persons that wait, which speaks pati-
ence: O Christ waits for poor Sinners opening to
him: had it not been a wonder if he had gone by,
and called as he passed by such wretches as we
are! but to take up a stand at our Doors, this
speaks his great patience! well may it have a note
of Admiration upon it: why doth not the Lord
write, and fix a *God have mercy*, or a *Lord have*
mercy, upon the Door, as they do upon houses

where the plague is? is not the plague in that Sinners heart that will not open to Christ when he knocks and calls? why is he not shut up for the plague of an hard heart? O! the Lord will have a little more patience! he loves to be gracious.

2. Standing is a posture of readiness to enter in, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without?* O poor Sinners, the Lord Jesus stands in a ready posture to come in, and dispossess the strong man armed, and spoil his goods, and take possession of you for his own; he stands at the Door: no sooner do you open, but he will be in.

3. Standing is a posture of Observation: he stands to make Observations of the openings of poor Souls: it was the posture of Watchmen, *I will stand upon my watch-tower.* The Lord stands to observe how Souls open unto him: Souls open to Christ many times gradually, now a little, and then a little; and the least opening of the heart, falls under the eye of Christ; the Door opens by degrees, not all at once; stands not wide open all at a time, but Christ makes a little opening by one Ordinance or another, or one Providence after another; so he stands observing the Souls working and opening toward himself: This is his delight, to make Observations upon the workings of Sinners hearts after himself.

4. Standing is a posture that speaks loathsomeness to depart; when persons stand as our Beggars; that have no mind to go away: *I saw the Lord standing upon the altar,* which was to signify his loathsomeness to depart from *Israel*: he was now in a removing posture: so the Lord Jesus stands at the door, arguing his gladness to be in, and his

his loathness to go away; if you had but your eyes opened, you might see him about your Doors this day: O Sinner, or secure Professor! Jesus Christ is loath to go away, until you let him in. The King of Glory would enter in this day. O never let it be said you shut out the King of Glory!

5. Standing is a posture of one desiring something: we stand up when we desire any thing: O how desirous is Christ to get into the Souls of poor Sinners? he desires them to open, *Open un-* Cant. 5.2.
to me my Sister, my Spouse, &c. O who

would think that Christ should desire to be in such Souls! *This is my rest, for I have desired it.* He would say thus of Sinners hearts, if they did but let him in; he would take up his rest there: and shall Christ desire at our hands that, we shall not grant him? O that ever Christ should have a desire to such Souls!

Had Christ come riding Post through your City, and knocked at your Doors, and had said, bear with me, or you are all damned; it had not been much: but to stand and knock day by day, and year by year, with the enlarged hand of love. Oh unspeakable patience! says M. Bridge

Well may this have a note of Admiration upon the head of it.

2. Posture of Christ is knocking: *I stand at the door and knock*: This is also an admirable posture; he might have stood, and not have knockt; or knockt, and not have stood; given a cursory knock as he passed by; but O wonderful to stand and knock! they might not onely have seen him stand; but that they were blind; but heard him knock, but that they were deaf! blind Souls and deaf Souls! O how sad is this! and yet Christ is at the door of such Souls.

3. Posture is Calling: *If any man hear my voice*: it seems he calls, still more admirable! he stands and knocks, and calls at the door; if they know

not my knock (says he) it may be they will know my voice ; we may know a Friend by his voice, when we have almost forgotten his face. O Sinners, admire Christ should still call with mercies voice, that the still small voice should be heard by you! his voice might have been a voice of Judgment; the voice of Wrath, the voice of Thunders, the voice of the Lord, that might terribly shaken thy heart (*The voice of the Lord is full of Majesty*) and not of mercy! O but what voice was it? *If any man will open unto me, &c.* This is his voice, O that you would hearken Sinners to his voice, while it is to day, and harden not your hearts.

Nothing is done by us, if the will comes not off to Christ. The condition is still Christ's love, till the will open to let in Christ. Thus one upon it.
Mar. 2. 33.

3, We have not onely in the Text, The Person, the Posture ; But the Place, at the door ; *I stand at the door* ; not under the window, but at the door : which place notes, not onely his desire of entrance, but also his readiness : The entring of Christ upon the Soul of a poor Sinner is very regular ; do not think he will come in at the window, there may be a window in the head set open by light and knowledge, and yet not a door set open in the heart : the will is the door, the understanding is the window : The door is the heart, called everlasting doors : *Open ye the everlasting doors, that the King of glory may enter in.* He stands at the Door, he would gladly engage the Will, as well as the Understanding.

4. Here are the Persons whose doors he stood at : what door was it ? was it some Saints door ? O no, at the door of the miserable, wretched, blind, naked : we read of persons standing, and thronging about the door, where Christ was, with their diseases ; this was not strange, one might easily have thought they were his Patients ; but

but for the Physician to come and stand at the Patients door, this may well have a *Behold* upon it ! who were they that were within ? O sad creatures ! yet he comes to their doors, and stands, and knocks at their doors.

Lastly, In the Text, we have a Promise made by Christ, upon the hearing his voice :

1. It is of entrance, *I will come in to him,*

2. Of entertainment, *and sup with him,*

1. Union, *I will come into him.*

2. Communion, *and sup with him.*

1. He comes in to dwell, before he comes in to discover his love to the Soul : First, he takes up his dwelling in the Heart, and then makes the Heart a comfortable dwelling, and sups with it, communicates his love to it : they used Suppers most at that time, as we may observe by the Parable of the Marriage-Supper, where Friends had sweet Communion together, as the Master of the Feast and the invited Guests, have sweet Communion together ? O the sweet Table-conference of Christ and his Guests ! O how doth he make their hearts burn within them, by his love-discourses and discoveries.

Observations are These.

1. Christ is but at the Door of many a Professor and Sinners heart, *I stand at the door,* &c.

2. Christ stands at the Door of many a poor Soul, willing and ready to come in upon opening to him, *I stand at the door,* &c.

3. Christ doth not onely stand at the Door of a poor Sinners heart, but he knocks, *I stand as the door and knock,* &c.

4. Christ

4. Christ will not refuse to enter the vilest, and most unworthy heart that opens to him; *If any man hear my voice, and open unto me, &c.*

5. Poor Sinners must hear Christs voice, before they can open unto him, *If any man hear my voice, and open unto me, &c.*

6. Some souls hear Christ, that do not open unto Christ: *If any man hear my voice, and open unto me, &c.*

7. Christ will be entring where souls are opening, *I will come in to him, &c.*

8. Christ will keep up a sweet communion with all the opening-souls to him, *I will sup with him.*

9. All souls that open unto Christ, keep a sweet Communion with him also; *And he with me, &c.*

First, Christ is but at the Door of many a Professor, and many a Sinners heart.

But however they were Professors, as they were a Church; Professors of Christ, and yet not Possessors of Christ; he was but at the Door. So may be, poor Sinner, thou mayst think he is come in, when he is but at the door; therefore it concerns thee to see where Christ is, within or without.

We read a sad complaint of Christ of those poor Jews: *he came to his own, and they received him not; to his own by profession, but they received him not; he stood without, they opened not unto him, to receive him, as a person is received into the house, by opening the door, and inviting in; hath not the Lord many times come to your doors expecting an invitation from you, and yet you have let him come no further than the doors? Professors, and not Receivers of*
Christ

Christ, how sad is this! we read of some Professors of a high rank, and yet he was without to Mat.7.22, them: *We have prophesied in thy name*; and for 23.

all the great noise they made by their great gifts and abilities, yet he never knew them, (*viz.*) they never were savingly interested in him; nor never savingly opened unto him, they were but in the out-Court of formal Profession. O! take heed of contenting your selves in the outer-Court! for that was not to be measured by the Angel, Rev.21.2.

but to be *given unto the Gentiles*. They that measure as the Angel did intend to build, first they measure, and then build; but the outer-Court was not measured: which argues, such must not be built for the Kingdom, *Ezekiel Chap. 40*. Sinners, also take you heed of being outer-Court comers to Christ: it is a dreadful Condition, for either Sinner or Professor, to be found in the outer-Court, when Christ shall come. By the outer-Court, is meant such as have a form of Profession upon them; an Allusion to the outer-Court of the Temple, where all might come: They should tread down (*viz.*) Persecute the people of God: We read here of the Church of *Sardis*, she had a name to live, but was dead; Rev.3.1. Christ was but at the door; for where he comes, he brings life with him, she was gone back, and Christ was gotten to the door.

1. Many *Laodiceans*, Professors and Sinners, Christ doth but stand at their door, because their unbelief had bolted the door against Christ: how is Christ said to come into a Soul, or to dwell in a Soul? The Apostle answers the Query, by that Prayer for the *Ephesians*, *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*. Unbelief leaves no room Eph. 3. in the Soul for Christ. O now, mayst not thou 17.
be

Joh. 3.
16.

Rom. 11.
32.

be a Professor, and an Unbeliever? O Sinner, while thou art in thine unbelieving state, Christ is but at the door, though thou mayst think he is in the House, and in the Heart: *He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him* (but the Greek reads it) *whosoever believes into him.* He gets not into us, nor we into him, but by believing; believing puts Sinners into him: therefore we read of unbelief *shutting up souls*; souls are shut up by it from Christ: it is the great Iron bolt that keeps out Christ; faith is the opening-grace unto him: O! when the soul is under the Exercises of faith, it sets all wide open to Christ, Crying, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without?*

2. Many poor souls, Christ is but at their doors, they have let in his Train, some of his Attendants, and they think, because of this, *The King of Glory is entred in.* O how may souls wofully miscarry upon this Point! Perish upon the mistake! you have let in family-duty, Religious performances, and truly in that you have done so, you have well done; O but these may be let into the house, and yet the King kept at the door; did not you set upon them before your closure with Christ? nay, do not you keep them up, and look not at the enjoyment of the presence of God in them? now it is the presence of the King that makes the Court; did not the *Pharisees* do so, and yet strangers to Christ, nay enemies to him? nay, did not the *Jews* do so; when their hands were full of blood, Great guilt upon them? O mistake not your souls in these, as the *Laodiceans* did; you may account your Family-duties, your Riches, and yet be poor, be beggarly Souls, in point of faith. The Retinue should follow the
King,

King, rather than go before him : it is great pity the King and his Retinue should be parted; some say Christ is in the house, and there are no Servants, no Duties to wait upon him; some say the Servants are in the House, and the King stands at the door : O let Christ and his Train go together.

3. Christ is at the door of many a Professor, and Sinner, because they retain some strangers, some enemies to Christ : He will not come in where he sees strangers (I mean some beloved Sin, so much made of, and delighted in) : when we see strangers, we have no mind to go into our Friends house, we say you have strangers : O, so says Christ, I see, Soul, you have strangers, there is no room for me yet ; I cannot come in, till they go out ; it was a sad saying of *Israel, Strangers have I loved, and after them will I go* ; Well then, Christ must stand without, while they are let in ? O how can Christ bear it, or brook it, think you ? will he not say as *Saul to Michal ? Why hast thou saved the life of mine enemy ?* Professours, look you have no Enemies of Christ hidden in your Houses. Sinners, if you will retain a beloved Lust, you cannot receive a beloved Lord; what, can you find in your hearts, your base lusts should be preferred before your blessed Lord ? will you thus requite the Lord ? *O foolish people and unwise !*

4. Christ is at the door of many a Professour and Sinner, because they have not been humbled under the sense of Sin : Gospel-humiliation lets in Christ (as I may say) or moves Christ to turn in ; Christ hath no words in an unhumbled Soul, he hath nothing to do there, *but with him, says God, will I dwell, that is of an humble and contrite heart,*

Jer. 2.
25.

Isa. 57.
15.

heart, to revive it: he takes not up a stand at the door, but takes his dwelling in the House of such a Soul: God hath two Houses to dwell in, his upper, and his lower House; now the humble heart, is Gods lower House; what will he do where he dwells? The Text tells us, *He will revive them*. O now, many a Professor was never under this Humiliation: this was pointed at in *Israel*: All *Israel* were not stung; one may be an *Israelite* by Profession, and yet not stung by Gospel-humiliation: now the brazen Serpent was only for the stung *Israelite*; O poor Sinner, wonder not if Christ be at the door, when thou never saw thy need of him, to give him an invitation in.

5. Christ is only at the door of some Professors, and Sinners, because their door-Posts have not the sprinklings of the Paschal Lamb upon them; now he comes not into the Soul, but he sprinkles his Blood upon it first, and then the Destroyer was to pass over, and he takes possession by sprinkling his Blood upon the Soul; O this Soul is mine, I have died for it: shut your doors, hide your selves, is an Allusion to the Blood of the Paschal Lamb. O, now if thou hast not felt in some measure this blood, he is but (I doubt) at the door: O how sweetly doth the soul open to Christ, when the blood of Christ cleanses the heart: dirt, you know, in the crevice may hinder the door from opening; but now the blood of Christ cleanses from all filthiness. O Sinners and Professors, get this blood upon your door-Posts.
- Exod. 12.
23.
- Isa. 26. 19.

Application.

Is it so, That Christ stands at many Professors doors, and many Sinners doors? 1. It is of Information to Professors, *Laodiceans*, 2. To prophane Sinners.

1. To formal professing *Laodiceans*; it shews the sad condition of such poor Souls, who think Christ is housed in their hearts, and he is got no further than the door; they think they are supping with Christ, and all this while he and they are meer Strangers, no familiar acquaintance betwixt them; they let him stand without, as one neglected and slighted, while others are taken in. If you ask, wherein doth the misery of a formal *Laodicean* lie, at whose door Christ stands, and can have no entrance?

1. Such souls profess under a Delusion, which is a great piece of misery: This poor Church was under a sad Delusion for all their Professions: O what self-flattery was found in the skirts of *Laodicea*! and is not self-flattery a great piece of soul misery? Can there be a sadder Judgement upon a Person, or a Church, or a Family, than to be given to a deceived heart? To have a better opinion of themselves, than Christ hath, as this Church? is it not a piece of wrath from God, to be given up to a Delusion, nay to a strong Delusion, to believe a lie? is not this to be a liar in Gods Dialect: *They say they are Apostles, but are not: but thou hast found them liars.* For souls to say, they are Believers, Church-members, interested souls in Christ, in whom Christ dwells, and to be found liars, O how dismal is this! what if thou not only profess and pray, and hear,
and

Rev. 2. 2.

and joyn with the people of God, and all this under mistaken Principles, That Christ had entered in upon thy soul, *and cast out the strong man armed*; and when thou comest to dye, thou seest it was a mistake, and cannot mend thy mistake? O what an unmendable, soul-confounding mistake will it be for to drop into Hell, when thou lookest for Heaven!

2. Such a soul under a formal profession, is harder to convince of his sad and secure condition, than open prophane Sinners: Therefore our Lord did thunder out such dreadful woes against the *Pharisees*, who were like these *Laodiceans*, full and whole souls, and were conceited they stood in need of nothing, one would have thought a few woes would have been wounding, and convincing unto them: O but how hardly are such convinced of their need of Christ! therefore he preaches that Doctrine to them; *The whole need not the Physician, but those that are sick.* And at another time he tells them, *Publicans and Harlots shall enter into the Kingdom before such*; nay, to convince such, God is put to his Oath: *As I live, saith the Lord I will not be enquired of by you.* They thought they would enquire and sin, pray and sin, sin and pray; and then they thought all was well: O, but says God, if you will not lay your sins aside, you may as well lay your duties aside; for your enquiries shall procure you no Answers, but such as shall be after the Idols of your hearts: And is not this great misery, to think your selves Believers, when you are but *Pharisees*; which may be in a more hardened condition than prophane Sinners?

3. Such souls under a formal Profession, that think Christ is in the House, when he stands but

Mat. 9. 12.

Ezek. 20.

3.

at the door, shall be discovered; God will discover who is within, whether it be Christ. or Corruption; he will discover who is House and Heart-keeper. We read of some who flattered themselves in their own iniquities, *until they be found to be hateful*: this may be, and is the case of many a Soul under a Form of Profession: *they flatter themselves in their own eyes*: it may be the Man hath Parts, Affections, & Expressions, and his corruption lies hid a great while under these; until at last, God let him fall into sin, and be found out by some hateful iniquity. I heard lately of a young Gentleman who was weak in Understanding, and his Mother having several Persons of Quality at Dinner, charged him to speak little, but he spake nothing: so the Guests at Dinner suspected all, and fell a whispering one with another, and the young Gentleman heard them; then cried out to his Mother, *I now may speak Mother, they have found me out!* O, so God will find us out, what we are as to State; so he found out the Man *that had not on the Wedding Garment*: O, what work will this make in thy soul; to be discovered to be none of the Lords! and so the foolish Virgins were discovered at last, and the foolish Builders, when the floods beat, and the rain fell, then the Foundation was discovered to be upon the Sand. *As a thief is ashamed when he is found, when he is discovered, so is the house of Israel ashamed.*

4. Such Children of the Kingdom who have made Christ stand without their hearts, he will make them stand without his hearing, *Not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* O but see their claim, they talk't at a high rate, O but yet he never knew them;

G

and

Pf. 36. 2.

Met. 22.
11. 12.Mat. 25.
11.

Jer. 2. 26.

Mat. 7.
22. 23.

Mat. 8. 12. and we read of *children of the Kingdom* shut out, and of the poor foolish Virgins, the door was shut; Afterwards came also the other Virgins saying, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*: now all their cries will not prevail, time was they might: but now the gate of mercy was shut, and the bridge of mercy drawn, this was a hopeless afterwards, like *Eſau's* afterwards, *that ſought repentance with tears, and could not find it*: O what misery will this be!

Heb. 12.
17.

5. Such as are under a form of Profession, and under no real Poſſeſſion of Chriſt, their condemnation will be greater than others, *Chorazin's Hell* is an hotter Hell than *Sidon's*; it will be more tolerable for prophane Sinners, than ſuch, though unexpreſſibly intolerable for both; we read of ſome having their Portion with Hypocrites and unbelievers: Hypocrites, ſays one, are the free-holders of Hell, as though their place of Torment was diſtinct from others. A bag of Gold will ſink a man, as well as a bag of Lead: a man may periſh, nay ſink as deep in eternal miſery, under a golden Profeſſion, as well as under Leaden prophaneneſs: O what a piece of miſery is this to periſh under ſo ſmooth a Profeſſion.

Mat. 11.
21, 22.

The ſecond Branch of the Information, is to ſhew us the miſery of Sinners, at whoſe door Chriſt ſtands, and cannot get entrance.

1. Such a Souls miſery will lye in this, its periſhing will be wilful and inexcusable; thou art inexcusable, O man, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Thy deſtruction is of thy ſelf*: O poor Soul, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, O *Iſrael*; did not Chriſt cry to thee, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock*? Did he not cry, why wilt thou dy? Did not he cry, *If thou wilt open unto me, I will come in and ſup*
with

with thee? And, O sad condition! Christ thus calling, and thy poor soul perishing! O will not thy poor soul stand trembling before the Lord speechless in that day of thy appearance; when the Judge will say to the poor condemned Prisoner, What sayest thou for thy self, that sentence of Death, yea of eternal Death should not be pronounced against thee? O, will not thy silence give a doleful consent to the reading of thy Righteous sentence, to be cast for ever out of his Presence?

Why dost thou yell in Hell, O damned soul? had not thou Christ offered when upon earth? Faith M. Obad. Sedgwick

2. Such souls that onely have Christ stand at their doors, their misery lyes in this, if he come not in himself, none of his benefits come in: Therefore first *he comes in, and then he sups with them*; all his benefits are made over to Sinners, by taking his person; if he himself be not yours, what is his will never to be yours: O how many of us love him, rather for what he brings than what he is! it is Portion, and not his Person, that many souls are taken with. But such souls he comes not in unto: I must tell you, the Person of Christ is to be the object of our Faith and Love, abstracted from the benefits; Though some of you would think this high Divinity, I am sure it is a true and a hard lesson.

1. There is no room for Adoption, but by taking Christ, receiving Christ, *To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God*; we are all the Children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Joh. 1. 12.

2. There's no room for Justification, but by taking Christ: *we are Justified by Faith*, Rom. 5. 1.

3. No room for Union, but by taking Christ: *I will come into him, &c.*

4. No room for Communion, *I will sup with him.* Eph. 3. 12.

5. No room for Acceptance; *we have access with confidence through the faith of him.*

O sad case, to be stript of all these at once, by Christ standing at the door!

3. The misery of a Sinner at whose door Christ stands, is, Such a Soul is a dead Soul; *He that hath the Son, hath life.* When poor beggars stand at the door, 'tis an Argument some dead Corps is there, or was lately there; so Jesus Christ standing at the door, speaks a dead soul in the house, he is standing, and calling, the soul is both dead and deaf! O what a pity is this to see a man of Parts, a man of Stature, a man of Profession, a Preacher of Gifts, to see a man a fine Scholar, a sweet natur'd Man, an excellent Companion (as we say) O but Christ is but at his door, he is a dead soul, his body is but a comly coffin for his soul.

4. A Soul, that Christ stands but at the door, is under the indwelling of *Satan*, the Dominion and Rule of *Satan*, as in Persons possess: O what power hath he over them, to act them at his pleasure! O how did he sometimes cast them into the fire, sometime into the waters where-ever he takes them, is not this a great misery? you would think a body possess by *Satan*, would be a great affliction, and is not a soul much more; either *Satan* or Christ must govern, and Lord it in thy Soul; and if Christ be but at the door, *Satan* keeps the Palace, his goods are in Peace.

Luke
12. 36.

5. A Soul that hath Christ *standing at the door*, he will go away, he will not always wait, and stand; but in a little time, will mark the door and be gone, if you *open not unto him immediately*: standing is a wearisome Posture, know Sinner, *you may weary God, as well as Man, you have wearied*

ried man, and will you weary God also? O then Is. 7. 13.
 what will become of your soul, if he say once to
 you, as he did to them, *I will return to my place,* Hos. 6. ult.
 an allusion to a Judge that is going off the Bench:
 O then the Prisoners cry, good my Lord, good my
 Lord, have mercy: O souls, what if he should go
 off the Mercy seat: O cry hard for Mercy, for
 Pardon before he go.

Rev. 3. ver. 20.

Behold I stand at the Door and knock, &c.

Here follows the second Use of the first Do-
 ctrine; if Christ stands but at the Door of many
 Professors, and Sinners,

Then it is a word of Exhortation to all both
 Professors, and Sinners, to let Christ in, to give
 Christ, who stands at the door, an invitation unto
 the house, and heart: O let us give the Lord
 Jesus house-room, and heart-room; shall Christ
 come and beg room, and you deny him? We
 would not do thus with a Friend, nay not with a
 stranger, let him stand at the door, hour after hour,
 and shall we deal thus with Christ, nay, who hath
 stood year after year, as he said, *Three years have* Luk. 13.
I come seeking fruits on this fig-tree, and found none; 7. 8.
 so may he say many years have I stood, waited, and
 knock't, and called for entrance, and found none,
 none answered, none opened; O how sad is this
 that the Lord Jesus should be thus dealt withal?

First Motive.

Let us open to Christ, both Professors, and Sin-
 ners, and let him in, he hath stood long. Stand-

ing is a wearisome Posture to us, but not so it seems to Christ; we read of the Lord Jesus, he stood at the Spouses door, until his locks were fill'd with the Dewes of the Night, he did not only wait all the day, as he complained in the Prophet: *All the day long have I stretched out my hands, unto a gain-saying People*; but he also stood without, in the night as well as the day, O the patience of Christ! Dew is used sometimes to signify afflictions, as waters are oftentimes, viz. He was afflicted with the Churches refusal, to open unto him, and drops may signify Reproaches, the enemies begin to reproach Christ for the Spouse carriage to him: it is a reproach to Christ, to be shut out of our hearts as to a child to be shut out of Doors, all this was in the night of the Churches ignorance, and coldness in Religion (thus one upon the place) Christ is bare-head at the door, begging entrance, *my head is filled, &c.* is it not a wonder he should not be gone from the doors? Admire the patience and long-suffering of Christ, he might have mark't the doors if thou and I had not opened unto him immediately, Jesus Christ hath stood many a year at thy door, and said as once to *Jerusalem*; *O Jerusalem, when wilt thou be made clean? when will it once be?* O poor soul how long wilt thou have thy heart shut against me? when wilt thou open unto me? when will it once be? how can you think he will stand much longer, who hath stood so long already? May not you weary him, sinners, at last? therefore open unto him.

Isa. 65. 2.

Cant. 5. 2.

Thus one
upon it

Isa. 13. 27.

Second Motive,

To open to him, he will not stand long: O how should this both awaken drowſie Profeſſors, and dead Sinners, what if this ſhould be the laſt Ordinance, Chriſt ſhould take up a ſtand at thy Door? If this ſhould be the laſt Call, the laſt knock, that ever thou ſhould have? If Chriſt ſhould ſay, this ſhall be the laſt time of asking entrance, the laſt time of entreating to be let into thy ſoul, if after this Ordinance, the ſeal of a hard heart ſhould be clapt upon thee? if thy door after this day, be not only ſhut, but ſealed; what a ſad condition were then thy poor ſoul in? well thou knows not but thy ſpiritual Judgement is at the door, my ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man, what if Chriſt ſhould ſay now in the cloſe of this exerciſe, let them alone? well Sinners, Profeſſors, that have not opened unto Chriſt, this day is faſt approaching upon you when he will ſay to you, as to *Jeruſalem*, when he wept over it, and groaned out that ſad Complaint, *O Jeruſalem*, Luke 19.
haſt thou known in this thy day, &c. You had a 40, 41, 42.
 day in which Chriſt ſtood at your doors, wooed your poor ſouls, to let him in, called to open unto him, nay begg'd it at your hands, but now it is hid from your eyes, now I have taken my leave on you, and now your day of grace is over, which makes me remember that good counſel the Lord gave *Jeruſalem*, *Be inſtructed O Jeruſalem*, Jer. 6. 8.
leaſt my ſoul depart from thee, and I leave thee deſolate. I will not always wait on thee, I will not always woo thee, ſo ſouls open leaſt he depart from your doors, which if he go away, *Wo unto you if I depart from you*, (ſaith the Lord) if God

Hof. 9. 12.

go, then the Devils comes, and is let in, and gets possession of the soul: it was an affecting sight to see, *the Lord standing upon the Altar*, in a posture of going from the Temple: we read of several removes the Lord made from the Temple, Amos 8, 1. First, *To the threshold of the House*. Second, *To the Cherubims*. Third, *Then it stood upon the Mountain, when it went up from the midst of the City*, and then came the Captivity: so the Lord goes away gradually from a soul sometimes, as well as from a people, and then comes some sad Temporal or Spiritual Judgement.

Third Motive,

To open unto Christ, he calls to be let in, and complains he is shut out? O what sweet calls were they that he gave the Spouse, when he called to her to open unto him, *O what oyle words and language he gave her!* O what Rhetorick did he use to insinuate himself into her heart! 1. *Open unto me*, unto me thy husband, unto me thy Lord, what not open unto me? 2. *My Sister*, will we let relations be shut out? that he might get in, he tells her of the relation she stood in to him, what shut out our kindred, O how sad would this be? 3. (*My Love*) now he treats her above a Sister, as a Spouse, the choice and chief object of his Love. (4. *My Doves*) still more endeared ways of affection exprest. 5. *My undefiled one*, and adds to every one of these Epithetes *my*. O who could stand out against such a call! and yet all this ended in a Complaint, he would so gladly be in, he calls to you, we say who is their? But Christ now comes in and tells us, who is at the Door, *I stand at the Door*, It is I, says Christ, open

open unto me, he might have stood or not called, or called and not stood, but just as he had gone by: may not I say to you this day, as they did to that poor blind man, *Be of good cheer, he calleth thee?* O poor blind *Laodiceans*, be of good cheer, he calleth you, and what will not you go at his call? what if it should prove your last call, and you refuse it. Read over that word, *Because I have called, and you have refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded,* and see what sad words follow, *This is to refuse the calls of Christ, Omnia consilia mea, irrita cassaque reddidistis* (Others) made them vain and fruitless.

Fourth Motive,

To open unto Christ, Christ standing at your Door will aggravate your misery when shut out of Glory. If Christ had not waited on you so long, stood so long, as he said, *If I had not come to have spoken unto you, you had not had sin* (viz.) your sin had not been so sadly circumstantiated: so if Christ had not stood at your Doors, and knock'd and called, and yet you miscarry, who were once so affectionately intreated to open, unto him; what, children of the Kingdom shut out? how sad will this be; he once stood at the Door of your hearts, and you would not let him in, and as the day is coming, you must stand at his Door, and he will not let you in: and none went in with him to the Marriage, but such as were ready, and the door was shut, and then what a dismal cry was there, *open, open unto us.* O remember that word, the Aggravation lies there, *And you your selves thrust out,* they stood as a company of Beggars, that could not get in, he had stood

Mat. 8. 12.

Mat. 25.
10, 11, 12.

Luk. 13. 25,
26, 27, 28.

stood as a Beggar at the Doors, and now they stand as miserable Beggars at his Door, who had sometimes been famous Professors.

Fifth Motive,

To open unto Christ, is the Dignity of his Person, *I stand at the Door and knock*, He is the King of Glory, and this is made an Argument to open unto him, *Be you lift up you Everlasting Gates, and the King of Glory shall enter in, Ye Everlasting Doors* (an Allusion says one) To the Doors of *Solomons Temple*. To have the Ark perpetually to abide therein. Whereas before the Ark was removed from place, to place; therefore called *Doors of Eternity* (in the Hebrew) O Christ would dwell in your souls to Eternity, or without removing from you, if you would let in this King of Glory; shall such worms as we keep this glorious King at our Doors? We read a glorious description of God, *The high and lofty one, that inhabits Eternity*, and says a soul, can this high and lofty one condescend so low, as to come into my heart? O he that inhabits Eternity, will he dwell in such a wretched soul as mine? yea, that he will, also *with him, that is of a humble, and contrite heart, will I dwell*; God, this glorious God, hath two Houses, his upper-House, and his lower-House; a humble soul is Gods home (as I may say) one of his homes: O but will he discover himself to me? he may be in my heart, and not discover himself: O, yea, he will dwell in that soul to revive it; O now, who would keep out such a Person as this?

Phil. 24. 7.

M. Ainsw.

Isa. 57. 15.

Sixth Motive,

To open unto Christ, he hath opened his heart unto you, and all that he might get into yours, his heart hath not been shut unto you. 1. He hath opened his Fathers heart unto you; *He hath declared him*, expounded him (so the word is) He hath told us what thoughts of God, and thoughts of Peace he hath had bubbling up in his heart towards us from all Eternity; for the Promises of God in the Gospel, are discoveries of his purposes, and these purposes run to souls in Christ: The only way to get into our friends heart is to open our own. 2. He hath opened his own heart, *who is this that engages his heart to draw near unto me, saith the Lord?* God the Father admires it, that he should open his heart so wide, on the behalf of poor Sinners; therefore we read of his Promise to manifest himself unto poor souls, *I will manifest my self unto him.* (Erasmus reads it *Tacite & clam indicare*) it properly signifies to shew a thing both privately and publickly; Christ will manifest, or unbosom himself in both private and publick to poor souls. Another reads it, to render a thing as plain as if it were set before ones eyes, then thus Christ set forth his heart before us; and shall we after all these plain discoveries of his heart in the Gospel keep him out of ours? it is said of Christ, as Mediatour, *I have not hid thy Righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness, and thy truth from the great Congregation.*

1 Joh. 18.

Eph. 3.11.

Isa. 30. 21.

Joh. 14.
21.Psa. 40. 9,
10.

Seventh Motive,

To open unto Christ, then the destroyer shall pass-over, he will then sprinkle his Blood upon your doorposts, O what a mercy would it be to have the token of Pacification and atonement fixed upon your doors! as when Garrisons a stormed, if there be any friends in it, the Stormers send them in Protections, to fix at their doors: such a token was *Rahabs* scarlet thred, tied to her window, which some have thought typed out the blood of Christ, which must be our protection only in times of Divine displeasure, therefore we read that Word, *Enter into the Chambers and shut the doors, till the indignation be over past.* An Allusion to the doors of the *Israelites*, that they were not to be stirred out of, as hath been already hinted, on the Doctrinal part. What a mercy would it be to have the destroyer pass-over you, when the poor *Egyptians* shall be smitten with the wrath of God! neither death nor condemnation shall have power over such souls.

Isa. 26. 19.

Eighth and last Motive,

To open unto Christ, by his coming in to you, poor souls, he will dispossess you of the strong man armed. There's never a poor soul out of Jesus Christ, but is really possessed by Satan in a Spiritual sense, therefore we read of the Spirit working in the children of disobedience, as the Spirit acts possessed Persons, and works them, O what a mercy was it in the times of Christ to be delivered from unclean Spirits! So it is in this sense (the Word working in the fore mentioned place)

Luk. 11.
22.

Eph. 2. 2.

notes, the most lively activity, that can be, it notes an actual and effectual force, so doth Satan act and force poor souls out of Christ: if poor souls were but convinced of this, you would be as much running and thronging after Christ, to dispossess souls, as was to dispossess bodies, when he was upon earth. O now the letting in of Christ, would be the ejection of Satan.

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger then he comes upon him, and overcomes him, he taketh from him his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils, (now the Evangelist S. Matthew reads it) How can one enter into a strong mans house? The strong man is Satan armed, with all his policy, and subtilty, to keep out Christ; the Palace or House, is the heart of a poor creature before Christ enter in upon it, his goods are in peace, (viz.) All is quiet, and still, and at rest, in the soul, but now the stronger then he enters, that is Jesus Christ, that comes to take possession of the Soul, and he turns out Satan, spoils his armour, as Emperours unarm the Captives, the same word is used of the conquest of Christ, upon the Cross: He spoiled Principalities and Powers, he disarmed, and let them naked (as the word signifies) O now what a mercy would this be, for Satan to go out, and Christ come in?

Luke 11.
21, 22.

Mat. 12.
29.

But now that we have done with the Motives, me thinks I hear some poor Soul say, I cannot tell what hinders opening to Christ, I desire to open unto him, but alas I find I do not open unto him, he is but at the door yet, and he was there many years ago, now what are the letts, and barrs that keep him out? before you have helps to let him in, it is convenient you should know the hinderances

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derances that keep him out, the conviction of which hinderances, is a good step towards opening to him.

First, That which keeps Christ at the Door, is self-confidence, and conceitedness of our good estate, this was the hinderance to Christs coming into these poor *Laodiceans*. They were rich (*viz.*) in their own opinions they were so, and increased in goods, such were the *Pharisees*, whole Souls, and so looked not out after the Physician. Now Christ hath nothing to do with such souls, he came not to call the Righteous to Repentance, self-confident souls: it may be many poor souls think he is come in, and so cheat their poor souls, because he hath been calling, knocking, standing therefore they think he is come in, the poor foolish Virgins thought so, but O what a disappointment did they meet with at last! To be but shut out for all their Profession and confidence: we read of some that make themselves rich, (*viz.*) in a conceited interest in Christ, and experiences, and have nothing, are really Beggars. Full (*viz.*) full of peace, and joy from their own conceit, and yet not full of true peace and favour with God.

Pro. 13. 7.

Mat. 7. 23,
24, 25.

Secondly, That which keeps Christ out is resting in a formal *Laodicean Profession*, and thus they deceive themselves; they think they let him into their hearts, when they let him in by Profession into their lives: it was the complaint of a Father, *How many kiss Christ, but few love Christ*: your Profession, is but a kiss, a meer complement, if you do not let him take Possession of your souls, it is not every one that says Lord, Lord, can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, they had a famous Profession upon them, but yet Christ never entred their hearts, *I never knew you*, these *Laodiceans* were

were considerable Professors, yet he was but at the door, O how many poor souls that rush into a Profession of Christ before ever they have truly closed with Christ! how sadly have these late years spoken forth this truth? alas *he is not a Jew that is so outwardly, but that is so inwardly.* Rom. 2. 29.

Third Hinderance which keeps Christ out of the soul, is persons ignorance of their need of Christ, and hath need of nothing, this was one thing, that kept Christ from these poor *Laodiceans*, they were blind, they saw no need of Christ, *the whole need not the Physician, but the sick,* O what opening to Christ would there be! what running after him would there be, what crying out *Come in thou blessed of the Lord? why standest thou without?* If poor souls saw but their lost condition, their undone condition without Christ, How would souls run from Ordinance to Ordinance, from duty, to duty, with this cry in their mouthes, *none but Christ, none but Christ.* Nay are there not many Professors, many *Laodiceans*, who never aright saw your need of Christ? and so have but just come out to profess him, and not to open unto him: many see no need of him, as a Saviour, as a King, as a Priest, as a Prophet, no wonder if he stand without. Mat. 9. 12.

Fourth hinderance which keeps Christ out, Poor souls reserving some beloved lust: will he dwell where sin dwells with delight? can corruption and Christ be co-inthroned and dwell in one, and the same soul? is not Christ and sin, like *Sarah* and *Hagar* cannot dwell together? do you think Christ will dwell where his enemies dwell? alas poor soul there is no room for Christ, thy heart is filled already, we may say to thee (as was said to him) why hath sin, and Satan filled thy heart?
Christ

Mat. 9.
23.

Christ comes it may be to the door, and sees there is no room, all is taken up, and there he stands, and gets no further. The Lord Jesus doth in this case, as he did in that *where the minstrel, and people made a noise in the Rulers house, he said unto them give place, and when the people were put forth he went in and took her by the hand*, so the Lord will turn them all out, if he come in, that were making a noise, and swaggering in your soul. *Joseph* when he discovered himself to his brethren put all others out, so will Christ our spiritual *Joseph*, while there are so many sins in your hearts, he will not discover himself, there is no room for his discoveries.

Fifth hinderance that keeps Christ out of the soul is, the pride of poor souls, they are too proud to open to Christ, to rise to Christ, he resists the proud afar off, he comes not near them, this was a proud Church, this Laodicea; I am rich, &c. How she prides her self in her attainments, there is not room in a proud heart for Christ, he can but get to the door of a proud heart: I will dwell with him that is of an humble, and contrite heart; Gen. 45. I. God could not endure pride to dwell so near him, therefore for this, he cast the Angels out of Heaven.

Sixth hinderance that keeps Christ out of the soul is, unbelief, for he dwells in our hearts by Faith: believing is opening unto Christ, therefore we read of being concluded under unbelief, shut up (the word is taken from Persons that are close Prisoners, they are shut up) their doors shut against Christ, unbelief is the great Iron bolt of the soul, that locks Christ out, and keeps Christ out of the soul.

Seventh

Seventh hinderance that keeps Christ out of the soul, is souls prejudices they have taken up against Christ, men will not open now, that they are prejudiced, and naturally we are all so against Christ. O, sinners think if they let in Christ, farewell then all good days: it is a prejudice, poor sinners, for he would sup with you, bring in comfort to your souls: alas poor sinners when you begin to open unto Christ, then good days begin, you have never a good day before, and never a bad day after: how many poor souls had opened to Christ before now, but for their prejudice against him?

The next Word is of Direction.

To many poor souls that are stirred, or prest in Spirit, to open unto Christ, but they find it hard work, their hearts are so barr'd, and bolted against the Lord Jesus, how (says such souls) shall we be help'd to open unto him, &c.

First Help to open unto Christ, O then stir with the first motions, and calls of the Spirit of God to open; poor souls are snoring on their beds of security, are fast asleep, and Christ comes unto them, as he did to the Spouse, and says *open unto me my Sister, &c.* And poor souls are at this voice of Christ a little startled, and affected, but alas they are but awakened, as men by Thunder, startled for the present, but they get not up, they open not the door to Christ for all this, but lie down again, and sleep again, and Christ hears no more of them. *The Angel came to Peter when he was in Prison, fast asleep betwixt the Souldiers, and smote him on the loins, and said follow thou me, and what*

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was

Act. 12.
7. 8.

Luk. 12.
36.

was the fruit of it ? the iron doors did fly open before him, following the Angel the Angel said to him, *arise quickly*, so poor sinners if you did arise quickly, to open unto the motions of the Spirit of God, you would find Christ would come in; we read of opening unto him immediately. Seamen will take their first fair wind, to prosecute the voyage, so do you observe the gales of the Spirit, to open unto Christ.

Second help and direction to open unto Christ. is this, get a true and unfeigned love to him, we open to those we love, we open our hearts to them; if we did love him better, we should open our hearts to him more: love is an opening grace, therefore it is the way he takes to open our hearts to him, by opening his heart to us; this is the great reason why poor souls are shut against him, O the love of Christ never got into them, never got within them, never was shed abroad in their hearts by the holy Ghost, else it would constrain them to open unto him, it would offer a holy violence, and break all open for Christ to come in: we read a sweet passage, when the spouses heart was shut against him, what did Christ go away and leave her in her shut-up frame ? it is true he did withdraw, but he first went to her and dropt myrrh upon the handles of the lock, he put in his hand at the hole of the door, and what then ? her bowels were moved for him, or my bowels were moved in me (as some read it) *viz.* she was now affected; and afflicted with her unkindness in not opening to Christ, and what did it issue in ? I rose to open to my Beloved; here are two expressions observable;

1. He

1. He puts in his hand, he thought this would affect her heart.

2. He drops myrrh, all this was to engage her affections to open; O poor souls will not open, until the Lord do thus wth their souls: love will open any hour of the Night to the beloved; nothing but want of love shuts hearts against Christ. Love always widens its arms towards the object.

Third Direction, would you open unto Christ? take heed then of calling Satan into Council with you, when you are under any inclinations of heart to open unto Christ: as soon as Christ comes to knock at a poor souls door, to get in, then Satan will be about the door, to keep Christ out, O therefore consult not with him! He is a great enemy to souls opening unto Christ, upon these accounts. First, he knows he shall be turned out if Christ come in, when a stronger then he enters his house, O he is loath to be turned out of his possession, then he rages because his time is short. Secondly, He knows when Christ comes into the soul he will bring his train. This glorious King hath a double train. First a train of Graces. Secondly, a train of comforts. Now Satan envies the soul should have any Grace, or any comfort come into the soul, he knows as Grace comes in, Sin goes out. Secondly, as Comfort comes in, Corruption goes out, therefore we read the fear of the Lord, and the comforts of the holy Ghost goes together: and what is the meaning of Christ supping with the soul, but his good cheer he brings in with him, his feast of fat things? *viz.* The comforts of his love, he gives the soul liberally to tast of, saying, *eat and drink abundantly, O my Beloved.*

Act. 9. 3.
11.

Cant. 5. 1.

Fourth Direction, would you open to Jesus Christ? then labour for more experimental acquaintance with the exercise of Faith, as you have heard love is one opening Grace, so is Faith another, this opening to Christ is believing; therefore we read of unbelief, concluding or shutting up the soul from Christ, and of Christ dwelling in the heart by Faith; it is not opening unto Christ, when you are a little melted, and broken, but it is believing that lets him in, for all the affections, he may stand without, for all your tears he may stand without, and if you ask me how Faith opens to Christ, take these following particulars as an answer.

First, Faith makes a discovery of him as the only desirable object of the Soul; now when this is made out to the Soul, the Soul rises and opens to Christ, and not till then, therefore were those poor Jews so shut against Christ, there is no comeliness in him that he should be desired. When the daughters of Jerusalem heard what a desirable Object Christ was, then they made out after him, we will seek him with thee: when a soul sees him to be the Pearl of price, then it sells all for him: well then examine, what discoveries your souls have by Faith of Christs spiritual excellencies.

Isa. 53. 2.
Cant. 5. 6.
Chap. 6. 1.

Secondly, Faith makes a discovery, not only of his desirableness, but of his willingness to receive the soul into his open arms of Mercy: who will open unto Christ that doth not believe? Christ is willing to shew it kindness, we must see by Faith his open arms before we open our hearts to him; when the guilty child sees the Fathers arms open,

to imbrace it, O how it melts it! and makes it run thither! this is the door of hope Christ opens in the soul, before the soul can open unto him, O says the soul but what hopes is there for me! want of hope locks the Soul fast against Christ, the Soul hath the valley of *Achor*, for a door of hope.

Thirdly, Faith opens to Christ as it makes a discovery of Christs readiness to enter in upon the souls opening, it sees Christ at the door knocking, yea standing, which is the posture of a Person ready to come in: who will open the door to Persons who they believe will not come in? O but now Faith discovers Christ at the door, and so runs out to open unto him.

Fourthly, Faith opens to Christ as it sets love on work. Love in its highest affections, is but the flame of Faith, Faith works by love; these are sister Graces that go hand in hand always together, help one another.

Fifthly, Faith opens to Christ as it cleanses and purifies the heart, so we read of the virtue of Faith: there are two things it cleanses from, in order to opening to Christ.

First, it cleanses from guilt, and this is a great impediment to open to Christ: when the Spouse had been dabbling in her own guilt, indulging her self in her carnal ease and security, then she had her heart shut against Christ, though he stood, and urged, Open unto me, my Sister, my Love; so when Souls have been lately under guilt, O it hinders them from opening unto Christ! Guilty children are not for their fathers presence, guilt locks

locks up the soul from Christ, but now when faith comes to perswade it of pardon, O how sweetly doth the soul open to Christ! Guilt made our first Parents hide themselves among the Bushes from God: O guilt takes Christ for an enemy, and who will open unto an Enemy? Looks upon Christ as a Judge, and the Judge stands at the door, and who dare open to him, as a Judge? but now when the soul comes to see him, as a Jesus, at the door, and not as a Judge at the door, O then it opens to him! his name shall be called Jesus, he shall save the people from their sins, O then the soul runs to open to him, his blood upon the door Posts cleanses it from guilt: The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, and so it puts the soul upon opening to Christ.

2 Cor.
7. 1,

Secondly, Faith purifies the soul from the filth of sin, as well as guilt of sin, it helps the soul to open to Christ; dirt may hinder the door from opening, there may be so much dirt behind the door, that Christ cannot get in; what though you sweep the house; do not you lay the dirt behind the door? it is not cast out, the next temptation will spread it abroad again; but now faith carries it quite out, it cleanseth the soul from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; filthiness of flesh is dirt in the house, but filthiness of spirit is dirt behind the door, and this will hinder the door from opening.

Fifth Direction, Would you open to the Lord Jesus, be then quick of hearing, when he knocks, and calls; O be not spiritually thick of hearing, take heed of turning a deaf ear to the calls of Christ; if any man (says the Text) will hear my voice,

voice, and open unto me; there must be hearing before opening: O how many poor souls, whose beloved sins make such a noise in their souls, that they cannot hear the voice of Christ, when he comes and stands, and knocks at their doors! O how sad would it be to be deaf to the calls and knocks of Christ! 1. He calls affectionately, *Open unto me my Sister*, &c. O what good words doth he give poor souls! that they may open unto him how doth he call with good words and comfortable! 2. He calls earnestly, O he is in good earnest in his calls, that you should open unto him; would he call so often, so loud, if he were not in earnest? 3. He calls compassionately, it is in compassion to your souls, he calls, he knows you are undone for ever if you open not unto him, if he come not and sup with you; if Christ sup not with you, Satan will. 4. He calls unweariedly, he stands and calls: man is soon weary of calling, if not heard; but God is not, he can wait, as well as call and wait long to be heard, he doth not go away if not heard at first, and never give the soul another call. 5. He calls expectingly, standing is a posture of expectation, he expects to be heard by you, to be opened unto by you, O put not then a disappointment upon the expectations of Christ, this will be sad in the consequence to your poor souls.

Thus we have finished the first Observation upon the Text, That Christ stands at the door of many a Professor and Sinners heart.

Rev. 3. ver. 20.

Behold I stand at the door and knock, &c.

The Observation we now come to the Prosecution of is this.

That Jesus stands at the door and knocks, as ready to come in.

Deut.
10. 8.

2 Kin. 5.
25.

Lu. 1. 19.

Standing is a posture of a Person ready for service; it is said of the Levites, who are ready to minister before the Lord, they stood before the Lord, and it is used of servants, he went and stood before his Master; and it is used of the readiness of Angels to do service to God, It is said of the Angel *Gabriel* he stood before God, thus ready is Christ to take possession of your souls, and he stands at the Door.

1. Why doth Christ stand at the Door? first, because he is loath to go away, till souls open unto him, he is loath to be denied entrance, to be said nay; it is the posture of a Person, that is loath to depart, and would gladly be in.

First, doth not this speak Christs loathness to depart, he hath stood so long, how many years hath he waited for the opening to him? and hath said, I will wait this year also, and after that another; you would certainly conclude a Person was loath to depart, that keeps day after day at your Door, and will not away.

2, This speaks Christ loath to depart when he goes from the Door, he often gives warning of his departure, gives notice, that poor souls might come forth before he goes, and entertain him into their souls, what warning was that he gave *Jerusalem*? be instructed, O *Jerusalem*, least my soul de-

depart from thee, Christ warns by his threatnings to go away, wo be unto you if I depart from you, who will always send, wait, and knock ?

3. This speaks his loathness to depart from the Door, when he departs he does it gradually, by little and little, as from the Temple, as hath been before hinted, to see if poor Souls will call after him: leaving Souls is often gradual work, and so as they are left they harden, and are more shut against Christ, every day then other. First souls lose tenderness, in point of sins, and then in point of duty, and then in Ordinanees, then enters open prophaneness into their lives; then and then Jesus Christ hath mark'd the Door, and is gone, and that soul is as good as half in hell already. 4. This speaks Christs loathness to depart from the Door, that he brings the Gospel to your Doors, rather then he or you should not meet, he will not only come half way, but he will come all the way, if you will not go to his Gospel, his Gospel shall come unto you, as he said to *Zachew*, *This day is salvation come to thy house*. The Lord is loath to go away, that sends his Gospel from Door to Door, from House to House; it may be, says Christ, here is some poor child, some poor servant, some aged person, some young person, some that cannot stir forth after the Gospel, or some that will not in such a House, in such a Family, carry entreaties and Embassages of my love to them, commend my love to them, tell them how glad I would be of their Eternal welfare, when the preaching of the Gospel goes from house to house, it argues Christ hath no mind from the Doors of such Souls. 5. This speaks Christs loathness to depart, that your souls are under the shining of his Spirit, in your waiting upon him, would

would he yet strive with you, but that he is loath to leave you; do not you find the Lord at work upon you yet under his appointments? why hath he said you shall be striven with no more, smitten no more, ye revolt more and more, why hath not the Lord clapt the seal of a hard heart upon you? why hath not the Lord Barricadoed your hearts with the iron bolt of a Reprobate mind? why hath not the Lord passed a black act of Tradition upon you, as he did upon them? So he gave them up to their own hearts lusts, all this is because he is loath to depart from the doors.

Second Reason, why Jesus Christ stands at the door and knocks as ready to enter in, is because he wil set off the Glory of his patience; standing is a posture of Patience, of one waiting for an Answer, This is the time of the Lords waiting to be gracious, The Gospel therefore is called the word of Gods patience (as some take that Text, because thou hast kept the word of my patience) it presents the Lord standing, calling, knocking, at all our doors, O that ever God should have such patience with such as we? it may be matter of Astonishment.

First, Is not this patience so to stand after many provocations to depart from our doors? how often have some of our souls said, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways? O who would have stood but Christ after so many biddings be gone! have not we had the spirits of the *Gaderens* who besought Christ to depart out of their coasts? have not we rather many a time desired his room than his throngs? and yet he stands at the door. 2. Is it not patience in Christ to renew his knocks and calls at our doors? he might have
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been for ever just in saying I will never knock
 more, call more, strive more, and in saying as *Mo-*
ses to Pharaoh, I'll never see thy face more; he said
 see my face no more; first; and have not we said
 so many a time? But O the patience of Christ, I
 will try once again, one sabbath more, one op-
 portunity more. 3. Is it not patience in Christ to
 let the house stand that refuses to give him en-
 trance? Would not a King pull down the City
 walls that refuses to let him enter? Would not
 he pull down that house that would not let him
 in, as unworthy to stand upon his ground? won-
 der the Lord pulls not the house over thy head
 that lets him not into thy heart: how easie is it
 with God to pull the earthly house over thine
 ears? and it is infinite patience, he will let such
 Tenants live in any of his houses, for we are but
 Tenants at the will of the Lord. 4. Is it not pa-
 tience in Christ to stand after you have made ma-
 ny promises to open unto him, and broken
 with him? one would think if ever they speak
 with Christ, if ever they falsify their word, he
 will for certainly be gone, yet have not you
 done so with him, oftner then once, have not you
 said you would open to Christ under such an
 affliction, under such such a conviction, under
 such an Ordinance? 5. Is it not patience in
 Christ, to stand at your door when you have
 let them in that have come after Christ? and
 knockt after Christ? have not you let in his ene-
 mies? yet he bears with it, and goes not away;
 nay have not you dealt worse with Christ then
 with Satan? then with the world? then with
 your base lusts? They could be let in at first
 knock, at first temptation, or invitation; had
 not they the preference before Christ in
 your

your hearts? O what *Gaderen* hearts have we, that prefer our swinish lust, before our sweet Jesus! how can we let in our false lovers which wringe us to death by their embraces, and yet we can let Christ stand without, who is the only true lover of our immortal souls? &c.

3. *Reason* why the Lord stands at the Door of Sinners, ready to enter in, is, because he will leave their non opening to him unexcusable, as the Apostle says, thou art unexcusable O man. Sinner what wilt thou have to say, why thou didst not open unto Christ, when he shall call thee to an account? canst thou say, Lord, thou didst not stand at my door? at my neighbours thou didst, but not at mine; canst thou say, Lord, thou didst nor knock at my heart? O poor Soul the Lord will condemn thee out of thy own mouth: will not God say in a solemn manner, as once to them, what could I have done more to them, could I have called more, then I did? now you can form excuses, but in that day you will be silent. Remember they that desired to be excused, never tasted of his Supper: God will stop every mouth, that the world may become guilty before God; the word signifies so to be stopped, as when something is cast in the mouth, to hinder the screech, they shall not have a word to say for themselves. Guilty before God, (subject to Condemnation saith *Beza*) Souls shall have nothing to say why sentence of Condemnation should not be pronounced against them: they say Persons that are mute, and plead not, must by law be pressed to death, O Sinners you will be pressed by the wrath of God, for mutes, when the Lord shall take away all excuses from you, by standing, and knocking at your Doors, and yet you let him not in.

4. *Reason*

4. *Reason*, why Christ stands at the Door, and knocks is, that when souls do open to him, they may be under more indearment of heart to him, by reflection upon the time of Christs standing, O what a hard heart was mine to let him stand without until his locks were filled with dew, and his head with the drops of the night ! O that I should have my heart bolted so long against my beloved Lord ! How could I find in my heart to take in others, and keep him out ! O but now says the soul, my heart is so much the more endeared unto him, as he had patience to stay so many years for me, for my opening unto him ? O what a blessed Lord was this ! What a dear Saviour was he to stay so long on so wretched a soul as mine ; O now how shall I love God enough ? honour him enough ? obey him enough ? admire him enough ? what was it but unwearied love to stand so long at my door ? without encouragement given by me, O how will lovers walk about the door to get sight of the objects, and did not Christ so ?

5. And last *Reason*, why Christ stands at the Door and knocks, because he will when he comes in, humble the soul for its unkindness, and shame it for its refusal to open unto him, from time to time : O the soul now when it hath opened unto Christ remembers its former unkindness, as wormwood and gall, and so is humbled. As the Spouse had her Bowels moved by Christs putting in his hand at the hole of the Door, after she had refused to open unto Christ, my Bowels made a troubled noise, or rumbled (saith a learned Expositor) noting her sorrow and disquietness of heart for her beloved, who had suffered so many things for her sake, whom she had so sliighted, when

when he desired to come into her, O how kindly it melts and humbles the soul to consider how long Christ waited, tarried, stood and knockt before it let in this blessed Guest! O says the soul, what a wretch was I to let the King of Glory wait upon such a base piece of clay so long! now the soul becomes ashamed of its sleights it put formerly upon Christ.

Application.

Is it so that the Lord Jesus stands at the door ready to come in? then it is first, a word of *Information*.

First, it informs us of the unspeakable and infinite patience of Christ, that he will take up a stand at a sinners doors. First, consider but the Person that stands. Secondly, the Doors he stands at, and see if here be not wonderful patience.

First the Person, he that hath power to turn thee out of thy house, into Hell, that he should stand! we wonder at a little patience in a person great in power, they usually upon sleight provocations crush their inferiours; it was *Solomons* Council not to strive with a mighty man, and shall we strive and stand it out against the Almighty God? Here is Christ that hath all power, and yet much patience, all power given unto him, who could seal a Lease of Ejectment upon us, and cast us out of these clay houses, into the eternal fiery furnace, yet this Christ stands, and knocks at our doors.

Secondly, this Christ hath patience, who had his love so much abused: abused love with man soon turns into incensed wrath, we cannot endure our love of all things should be abused, but yet
how

how much hath the Lord Jesus suffered this way? is not this to abuse his love? when he stands year after year, and we will not let him in? we will not hear his voice? Is this your kindness to your friend, may Christ say, will you thus requite the Lord? is this to answer his love to come down from his Father's bosom to stand at your door? O what patience is this?

Thirdly, This Christ is patient, if we consider he makes not a transient pass by, but takes up a considerable stand, O what difference is there betwixt a stand and a pass-by.

Fourthly, See the patience of Christ in calling as well as standing. O how often hath that call rung in our ears? Hearken unto my voice while it is to day, and harden not your hearts as in the day of Provocation.

Fifthly, O the patience of Christ considering the disappointments he hath met withal, for standing is a posture of expectation; now to be patient under disappointments is patience indeed. O how long hath Christ expected sinners would open unto him; and where are the souls that have let him in?

Secondly, It informs poor Sinners of their own backwardness, as well as of Christs patience, and thus comes in the second information. 1. He stands at the doors of miserable sinners, thou art miserable, O what a strong piece of condescension is this in Christ to stand at the doors of a company of undone wretches! and yet they refuse to open, thou art miserable here, & thou art miserable to all eternity, if thou keep him out; it is not for his sake, but for thy sake he would be in, what say the scriptures? *except Christ be in you ye are reprobates*, if you let him get no further then the door,

2 Cor.
15. 4.

door, you are cast-away souls, you are mark'd for misery, O do not deceive your selves to think a form of Profession will secure your Eternal conditions, or a few convictions and affections: your souls may miscarry for all these.

1. Thou art a miserable soul, in that thou art in the guilt of all thy sins. Can one be under greater misery then under unpardoned guilt? Thou guilty sinner, what wilt thou do, when the Lords grim Serjeant Death, shall knock at thy Door to arrest thee, and drag thee to the Goal, when thou must never come out until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing? which will never be; O sad to have all thy debts then stare thee in the face, and no interest in a surety!

2. Thou art miserable as thou art under no hopes, for afterwards, if men have no afflictions upon them in this life, and have troubles in the flesh here, yet hopes of a future state of happiness, gives much ease, and satisfaction to the mind; but alas without Christ, without hope, and is not this a piece of Hell come already into thy heart? in Hell there is no hope. They say in the course of Sea-mens Voyages to the *Indies*, there is a Cape, they sometimes touch at, which they call the Cape of good Hope; now in thy Voyage to the vast Ocean of Eternity, thou mayst touch at such a Cape, and it may be hast touched at it many a time, but alas what is a touch at it, to touch at it in many an Ordinance, in many a Conviction, O but poor soul if thou miscarry in thy Voyage, it will but aggravate thy misery, and miscarriage, what sayst thou to that awakening word? If our hopes be only in this life, we are of all most miserable. O poor souls, if you have your portions here, though never so much according to your desire, you are still as

miserable

miserable as others. 3. You are miserable, at whose door Christ standes, as you have more to answer for then other poor sinners, that never had your fair advantages for heaven, O how will this add to your misery? if you let him not in, the knocks and calls he hath given you in your life time, will never bee forgotten by you in another world, there and then to consider how fair you were for heaven and happines, for souls to look up in hell and cry yonder Heaven, yonder glory, yonder Christ, yonder eternall Crown was I fair for, as miserable as I am here, now I once was called, on and knockt upon, to open to the Lord Jesus, but O my hard heart! my shut heart! my obdurate heart would not hear his voice, and now how deservedly am I shut out for ever! 4. You are miserable in that your own hand shuts the door, O how fast didsts thou keep it against Christ! as if Christ had come as some Kings Bailiffs, to have served a Judgment upon thee, as if thou wert affraid of his comming in, O how this will sting thy poor soul, and as a Dart strike through thy liver! that it was thy own act, and deed, how wilt thou cry with him, I my self was the cause of all this, when thou shalt see it was thy will, that was thy woe. 5. You are miserable in that your refusing to open to Christ will justifie him in his proceedings against you, at the great day of the Lord, you will bee like him who had not the wedding garment on, who stood speechless, O then will not your Silence give consent that it is but Righteous thou shouldest eat the fruit of thine own Evill wayes to all Eternity! thou wilt be self condemned before Gods own bar, and cry and plead guilty to thine own Indictment, no witness need be called

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on,

on; but thy Conscience, which is a thousand witnesses for Christ to knock at such doors; O who would think; such should be backward to open to Christ?

2. Consider he knocks at the door of rebellious Sinners, for the King to come to the door of a Company of poor Rebels and knock there, and call there, and say open unto me, I have pardon for you; I will be reconciled to you, *fury is not in me*, O who would think such should be backward to open unto him! hee hath recieved gifts for men, and gone to his father on high, O but are not these gifts for Persons soe and soe humbled! they are for the rebellious also, O poor Rebel, hee knocks at thy door. O poor Refractory Sinners, that are inexorable, he received gifts for such.

3. Consider he knocks at the doors of naked souls, the Text tells us of naked soules; thou art without Christ, as that poor man, who was stript; thou art stript of the excellent Robe of Originall Righteousness, thou hadst in thy first Parents, O but he still stands at thy door, calling thee to accept of white raiment, which white raiment is the Righteousness of Christ to cover the nakedness of thy poor soul, O who would think he should knock at these doors; you must goe out naked to Christ, stript of all your own Righteousness, when you open to Christ, you must put off all your filthy Raggs, when you put on this best and blessed Robe, you must not come clothed to Christ, which is the mistake of many a poor Soul to think to come fine and trim to Christ; we read the Lord had pittie upon the soul that was naked, and bare, and truly if you be

be not found, as *Paul* saith in him, and in his Righteousness, you are undone for ever, for all your Profession, and dutys, and affections.

4. He knocks at the doors of the poor and art poor as well as miserable, see that word, he preaches glad tydings to the poor, O that Christ should look after such! what Condescension is this! the Lord that dwells in the highest Heaven is said to look upon the poor, what says the soul thou art a poor creature worthy to be cast out of the Lords sight, for ever, O he stands at thy door! it is not the rich mans door he knocks at, he sends them empty away?

5. He knocks at the door of poor wretched souls, it may be thou art crying, O wretched man or woman that I am, who shall deliver me? what a vile wretch have I been! a hard hearted wretch to stand it out so long against soe tender a hearted Jesus, and thus like *Ephraim* thou art bemoaning thy self; O then the Lord is at the door, he hears all this, O thou cryest out of thy unworthyness, what an unworthy wretch thou art, O but he stands at the door of a wretched *Laodicea*, and shall such be backward to let him in! the word wretched Signifies (*Aerumnosus*, & *perpetuis pugnis fatigatus*) wearyed with troublesome and continuall Combates: like as a Champion striving a long time, and is at last like to be overcome, unless he be helped; so poor souls, though you count this a great piece of your wretchedness, yet he stands at the doors of such souls.

6. He stands at the doors of poor blind souls, and shall such be backward to let in Christ? Thou art blind, what though thou be a soul that sees not thy need of Christ, thy undoneness, without Christ, The Excellency of Christ, the willingness

of Christ to recieve thee to mercy, yet he knocks at thy door, and would be in, to let thee see all this, O poor soul wilt thou go blinded to Hell! wilt thou goe hoodwinkt to Eternall misery? thou wilt see all these things there; as it is said of the wicked, they shall see, but this is a wofull seeing, to see by the light of Hell fire, that is a precious word I have given thee for a Covenant to the Gentiles, what to doe? to open the eyes of the blind, and to deliver the Prisoners out of the Pit &c.

7. He stands at the door of degenerate souls; it may be some will say, O but they have been backsliders, have Apostarized from God, soe had this poor Church of Laodicea, yet he stood at their doors, ready to come in, soe he doth at the doors of poor backsliders, and as he stands at the door, he tells them, he would come in, and heal all their backslidings, and love them freely, and turn away his Anger from them; and put all these now together, and see how backward souls are to let him in, though he stands and knocks at such doors.

Second Use, Is it so that Jesus Christ is ready to come in, O then take a word of Caution along with you; Poor souls take heed of sending him sad away from your doors; do not sadden him, and cause him come plain to his Father, Lord I have stood so long, and waited so long at such a Sinners heart, at such a Professours heart, and I cannot get admittance, cannot obtain Entrance, they are still shut up against me: you will ask now when do we greive Christ, who is ready at our doors to come into our souls?

1. We grieve him when we do not believe his willingness to come into us, but complain and cry, O we are not fit to entertain such a Blessed guest! nay such a King of Glory, alas poor souls he expects no Entertainment from you, but opening to him, he will bring his own cheer along with him, as a great Person sends a poor man word, he will come and dine with him, and send in his Provisions, so doth Jesus Christ, he spreads his owne Table; now nothing can grieve Christ more, then not to believe him, when he says open unto me, and I will come in, and sup with you: would not this grieve any man, when he cannot be trusted, and speak never so seriously? O how serious is Christ, and yet how distrustful are we? we read Christ was grieved because of their unbelief: O what do poor souls make of Christ by unbelief! it would make one tremble to think, they make him worse then a man; an honest man will be (we say) as good as his word; nay do not poor distrustful souls make him a liar? O what noses of wax do they make the promises of the Gospel! little do souls know what they do when they thus grieve the Lord Jesus.

2. You grieve him, when you question whether he hath come into your souls, or no, because supper comes not up: these are two distinct mercies, his coming in, and his supping with poor souls, his supping may be a great while after his coming in, his being present is one thing, and his manifesting himself to be so, is another thing, his being there, and your seeing of him there; presently when souls are not feasted with the sweet meats of assurance, then they cry out, questioning their closure, O what a grief is this to

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Christ ! your fasting is as necessary, and as good for you as your feasting, O what a childish thing is this, to question your Fathers affections, because you are not every hour, or every day dandled upon his knee; away with this childishness of Spirit, this is folly bundled up in the hearts of Gods own children.

3. We grieve him, when we do not come forth to meet him, when he takes up a stand at our doors, he expects we should step forth to meet him, O how it would grieve a great Person to come in kindness to visit his Tenants, and none of them stir forth to meet him, this was the sin of the five foolish Virgins, they had not Oyl in their Lamps, and Vessels, when the mid-night cry came, go ye forth to meet the Bridegroom: when he comes to poor sinners doors, he sends Harbengers before, his Fore-runners, (I mean the motions of the Spirit) calling on poor souls, to prepare to meet their God, as the Prophet told them, prepare to meet thy God, O *Israel*.

4. We grieve him when he opens the door, and we let others shut it again; sometimes the Lord stands at the door so ready to come in, that he opens the latch, as he did the heart of *Lydia*, he lifts up your latch in a still private way, but O how often do we shut it again, and this grieves him, Satan he comes, and shuts it, and sometimes the World comes and shuts it, and sometimes beloved sins come and shut it, O how does this grieve Christ?

5. We grieve Christ when he stands ready at the door knocking, and we make such a noise, we hear

hear not. O how many poor souls make a noise on purpose that they may not hearken to the knocks of Christ, they go into sinful company, they rush into worldly business, the world and the comforts of it make such a noise, they deafen them, as they say the inhabitants about the downfall of the River *Nilus*, are deaf with the continual noise of the waters; so are poor souls with the streams of the creature comforts, that they say, as he did, I have no leisure to open unto Christ; this grieves Christ.

Then the third Use is a word of Lamentation. Is Christ ready? O what a pity it is that sinners are not ready! O that this might be for a lamentation! that Jesus Christ should come down from Heaven, to stand at poor sinners doors, and that so few should invite him into your hearts, O that it might affect our hearts Christ should have such cold entertainment in the World, that poor sinners should be so hardened against him! *Jeremy* said he would weep for your pride, and *David* his eyes run down with tears, because of transgressors, and O that word, Christ was grieved because of the hardness and unbelief of their hearts, O that we could be sorry that so few should give Christ heart room and house room.

Rev. 3. ver. 20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open unto me, &c.

Here is a threefold posture of Christ in the Text observable: 1. Standing, that we have dispatched, how he stands at the door ready to come in. 2. Posture of Christ is knocking. 3. Calling, if any man hear my voice.

But we are now to treat of Christs knocking. I stand at the door and knock; the word signifies to knock with great power, and force as to strike, or knock with a horn, being a Metaphor taken from the Ox, which gives a great blow, when he runs against any thing with his horn; I stand at the door and knock, with Power and force, or knock aloud, that sinners may come forth and open unto me.

For Christ to stand, was much; but for him to knock was more; and for him to call, and tell them who it was that stood at the door, was still more, he might have stood and not knockt, but that he had an ardent desire to be in.

1. Knocking speaks a desire to be in; therefore praying, which consists in the desires of the soul, is expressed by that very word, knock, and it shall be opened unto you, knock by prayer at heavens gates and it shall be opened: An Allusion to one that comes to a Gate, and would gladly be in, and this he manifests by his endeavours, in that he knocks, for desires are manifested by endeavours; so here

is Christ at the door, and would gladly be in, and this he manifests by his endeavours, in that he knocks: can you find in your hearts to let him desire entrance, and not give him entrance? O that ever he should have a desire to the Workman'ship of his own hands!

2. It implies importunity, knocking takes in importunity; we read the Parable of a man that borrowed the loaves, it is said the door was shut, yet for his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needeth, and then comes in that word, knock, and it shall be opened unto you, viz. be importunate with God; thus Jesus Christ is importunate with poor sinners to be in, therefore he knocks: we read of the unjust Judge, that was prevailed on by importunity, and shall not Christ's importunity prevail with us? Consider but this, the time may come we may be importunate with him to open to us, O how importunate were they that were shut out? when they cried open, open unto us! This word importunity signifies (impudence) it is taken from Beggars which are impudently importunate and will take no denial, some read it (*Instantia*) so Tremelius, O the Lord Jesus is at your doors, as Beggars that will have no nay say, no denial, he would so gladly be in.

3. This knocking implies the shut up, lockt up frame of the heart, when Christ comes to seek entrance; what needs knocking, if the door be not shut? when once the Master of the house hath shut up the door, and you begin to stand without and knock at the door, so it is here, our hearts are shut up naturally from Christ, Christ doth not find open house kept for him, when he comes

comes to poor Sinners; open house for sin and Satan, for the world, but O how fast lockt are they from Christ! and then goes no less to the opening of a heart for Christ, then the mighty power of God, they are willing in the day of his power, its only Divine Power that opens shut hearts that is fast.

1. The Bolt of Obduracy upon them, which keeps Christ out; a hard heart is shut heart from Jesus Christ, and when he comes, he finds hearts hard, a stone is rolled to the door, when Christ enters, to keep him out, O Sinners naturally we have all the stone of a hard heart rolled upon us, it is called a heart of stone, and will such a heart let in Christ! O who shall roll away this stone! The Angel must come down, even the Angel of the Covenant must come down to do it, it is said of the *Leviathan*, his heart is as firm as a stone; yea as hard as a piece of their nether Millstone; so it is with a poor sinner, when Christ first comes to knock at his heart, we read of an Adamant stone (which is *lapis indomabilis*) it will not yield at all, but says God, I will take away the heart of stone (some read *Auferam*) some *Removebo*) some *Extraham*) I will draw out of you, as a man when cut for the stone, the stone is drawn out of him, so if the bolt of Obduracy be not fast upon Sinners hearts,

1. His entreaties are stood out against, no entreaties prevail with hard hearts, though he stand at the door, and beseech entrance, yet they open not.

2. His threatnings prevail not with hard hearts, though he threaten to shut them out if they shut him out.

3. His

3. His Promises prevail not, if any man hear my voice, and open unto me, I will come into him, and sup with him, O what a glorious Promise is this hard heart stand out against Gospel Promises.

4. Corrections prevail not with hard hearts, made their faces harder then a rock they refused to return.

5. Invitations prevail not with hard hearts, Invitations of friends will prevail much, though one be half resolved to the contrary, yet the key of Christs sweet invitations opens not the lock of a hard heart.

6. Spiritual breathings and motions open not, prevail not with hard hearts, ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart, you alway resist the holy Ghost, the word signifies to fall against or fall cross, the hard heart falls cross to the motions of the spirit, and resists them; put all these together and ask if the heart Christ knocks at, be not bolted with Obduracy.

2. There is upon the heart, when Christ comes to knock, the bolt of obstinacy, it is not only shut, but it resists against Christ; it resists the knocks Christ gives it, stands upon its own defence, and refuses to give Possession to Christ; we read of a heart with a shield upon it, give them sorrow of heart (but the Hebrew is) give them obstinacy of heart, or a heart with a shield upon it, an opposing heart, a self defending heart, such a heart Christ knocks at, we read of the wicked, he strengthens himself against the Lord, and that while the strong man armed keeps the Palace, his goods are in peace. He keeps it as a Garrison is kept, that hath the Gates shut day and night, for fear

fear of the entrance of the enemy, sometimes it signifies to keep as a Prison is kept, when they watch them; so poor Sinners are watcht by Satan, least they should escape out of his Prison-house, by opening to Christ.

The bolt of Obstinacy is two fold.

1. A Bolt of obstinacy upon the understanding.
2. Upon the will: until Christ unlock both these, there is no opening to Christ, therefore it is the door, viz. The will he would have opened, not only the understanding, which is the window, as was hinted in the Explication of the Text: there must not only be truths propounded to your understanding, but the efficiency of God to draw our will.

1. There is a bolt upon the understanding therefore blinding, and hardening are the same in scripture; and the rest were blinded, but it is read hardened: The Word signifies (*Callosa durities*) a brawny hardness, O thus it is with Sinners, their judgements are lockt against Christ, by the blindness of their minds; closed eyes, and hard hearts go together, *Mat. 13. 15*. The opening of the understanding is a great stop to the opening of the heart to Christ, the understanding is as the window of the house, that is shut until Christ open it, and little light appearing, it was no wonder, the heart lay so sluttishly, and was so full of the deeds of darkness (says one) it is observable in the Covenant of Grace, the mind is said to be renewed before the heart, *Heb. 10. 8, 9. Jer. 31. 33*. Grace slips down into the affections, by the understanding.

2. The bolt of Obstinacy is upon the will, ye will not come to me, &c. I knew thou art Obstinate,

nate, and thy neck an Iron Sinew, and thy Brow
 brass, O now when the hand of Christ turns the key
 in the will of a Soul, it opens to him; this receiving
 Christ is this opening to him, the understanding is
 but the out-work of the soul, which may be taken,
 and yet the will, this Royal Fort, stand out; the
 Will is the great Wheel of the Clock that turns
 all the lesser Wheels about after it; the Will is
 shut against Christ, when he comes to knock at
 our doors: it is said of a servant of Satans, which John 8.
 by nature is all our conditions, the works of the 54.
 Devil he will do; take away Will (says one)
 and you take away Hell. The Iron Gate of mans
 Will is far from opening of its own accord, it is
 like the strong fort of *Zion* in *Jerusalem*, which
Joshua himself could not surprize, this our spiritu-
 al *David* only could do — Thus says Mr.
Swinnock.

3. There is the Bolt of Infidelity upon the heart,
 when Christ comes to knock at it, and indeed
 this is no small Bolt to lock out Christ, the
 Spring of this Lock goes hardly back, men are
 naturally said to be concluded under unbelief, shut
 up under it as Prisoners (*in arcâ custodia*) close
 Prisoners under lock and key, and so indeed faith
 only lets out the soul unto Christ, so that opening
 to Christ, is believing in Christ, closing with
 Christ; alas he comes now to knock at the door
 of an unbelieving heart, a heart of unbelief is so far
 from opening to Christ, that it is all for depart-
 ing from Christ; Hardness of heart, and unbelief
 go together. He was grieved because of the hard-
 ness of their unbelief.

4. There is the Bolt of the Law, the Curse of
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the Law upon a heart, when Christ first comes to knock at it, therefore we read of being shut up under the Law, kept under the Law, shut up into the Faith.

Gal. 3.
23.

1. Kept as a Town of War is kept.

2. Kept as Prisoners are kept from stirring abroad. O poor souls cannot stir out to Christ, until Faith in the Gospel Covenant take them by the hand and lead them. The old Covenant keeps them shut and bolted under their doubts and objections, until Christ prevail with them in the way of the new Covenant to come to him.

3. There is upon poor Sinners hearts, when Christ first comes to knock at them, the Bolt of Impudency, therefore we read of a hard and a impudent heart, put together in the word, Impudent, and hard hearted: poor Sinners if they had any shame, would not let Christ stand without, year after year, and refuse to open, they have made their faces harder then a Rock, viz. grow impudent in sin, they can sin and not blush. O this keeps out Christ, to arrive at such an height in sin, as is said of some, they were not ashamed. Would not you have been ashamed, any of you sinners to have dealt thus with a friend, a neighbor, to let him stand at the door and knock time after time, and none to stir to the door? put these now together, and see if hearts be not bolted against Christ, when he comes to knock at them.

4. Knocking, implies some errand a Person hath to deliver, O poor Sinners when Jesus Christ comes to knock he hath an errand to you, and would you know his errand? the Text tells you, *He would sup with you, he would come and maintain*

Com-

Communion with you. O Sinners the errand is for your sakes, not for his own, and will you let Christ go away without his errand? is this your kindness to your friend?

1. It is an errand of the greatest consequence in the world. A foul errand, the greater the errand, the more ready we are to hearken to the Person that brings it. We read of the young Prophet that went to anoint *Jehu*, I have an errand to thee, O Captain, and *Jehu* said unto him, which of us all? and he said, unto thee, O Captain; so comes Christ saying and knocking, and calling out, I have an errand unto thee, O sinner; now we should say in an Ordinance, which of us O Lord? and would not he say, unto thee O sinner? O then arise, and go into the house with him, its an errand of Eternal Consequence; not about Estates, and Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, but your immortal precious souls.

2 Kings
9. 5.

2. It is an errand that must either be delivered now or never, hearkned unto now or never; you must either hear what Christ hath to say to your souls now, or else there will be no hope for you: what thou findest to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor no knowledge in the Grave whither thou goest; now is the day of Salvation, neglect to hear Christ in this present now, and your souls are undone for ever.

3. It is an errand the Father hath sent him, if a friend send one with an errand, we will entertain him kindly; the Father sent him, he came from above, how often doth he tell us of the Father that sent him, he brings this errand from a dear friend of yours, therefore open to him, and give him entertainment.

4. It

4. It is an errand you have long been deaf unto, he hath brought it many a time, and you have said as he did, come again to morrow, I will hear it at a more convenient time; if one should come of an errand time after time, and never find you within, he would be weary at last, and forbear: O poor Sinners so will Christ.

Judg. 3.
19.

5. It is an errand in compassion to poor souls, here now, Sinners, come errands of mercy, and pity, but here will come errands of wrath and displeasure, one day, such errands as *Ehud* came to *Eglon*, which we read of, I have a sweet errand unto thee, and with that he stabbed him; O how sad will this errand be! O how terrible was that errand to *Nabal* of the destroyer coming upon him, and that to the fool in the Gospel, this night shall they take away thy soul: thus much for what knocking doth imply,

1. It implies desire to be in.
2. It implies importunity to get in.
3. It implies the heart to be fast bolted.
4. It implies that Christ hath an errand to the soul.

The next Query to the proof of the Doctrine will be this, how Christ knocks?

1. The Lord Jesus Christ knocks, in the motions of his spirit, which sometimes gives louder knocks, and calls at our doors, then at other times, some whiles his knocks are stronger, then at other seasons, sometimes he doth but whisper, and sometimes he cries aloud: alas how many poor souls that know not the knocks of Christ: that do not say it is the voice of my Beloved,

that

that knocks, therefore the Spirit of the Lord is by way of Metaphor, called the hand of the Lord, the hand of the Lord carried me (saith *Ezekiel*) into the valley of Vision. As a man knocks with his hand, so doth the Lord by the motions of the Spirit, at the door of poor Sinners; O poor souls do not you and I know what these knocks mean? and why should we keep him out, it is our dear friend, the Lord Jesus that knocks: O how long shall we grieve the Spirit by quenching its motions? will the Spirit always strive with man? will the Spirit of God always move and breathe upon such hard hearts? you may poor Sinner, vex his holy Spirit, and they vexed his holy Spirit and he became their enemy and he fought against them. You may cause your friend to become your enemy by standing out against the knock of the Spirit, what if you should by standing against its knocks, do despite to the Spirit of Grace? O then you may look for vengeance from God, as it follows in the Text.

2. The Lord Jesus knocks by the Word, O what knocks doth the Word give at Sinners hearts? sometimes the inward voice of the Spirit knocks, and at other times the outward voice of the Word knocks. In many an Ordinance how hath he beseeched heart-room of you, how hath he begged entrance? Alas what is the whole Gospel, but the entreaties of Christ to get into the hearts of poor Sinners? O how often hath the Lord sent his servants to say I have an errand to thee poor soul, and unto thee poor soul: and it is from the God of Heaven, and he hath sent me, by such a word, to tell you, if you open not to Christ, you are undone for ever, if you get

F not

not an interest in Christ, you are miserable to all Eternity, by closing with the Lord Jesus, you may be happy. Have you not oftner than once felt these knocks? well, know this word that knocks at your doors now must judge you another day. The word that now you sleight, and trample upon, must it upon you for life and death another day, therefore it is no trifling with Ordinances I will assure you.

3. The Lord knocks in the secret checks, and terrors of Conscience, every check of Conscience is a knock. O have not your Consciences said many a time, to you, as God to *Jonah*, dost thou well to be angry. O sinner dost thou well to continue in thy neglects of Christ? dost thou well to haunt wicked and sinful Company, to the hazard of thy Precious, and Immortall soul? how long will it be before thou forsakest the foolish and live. One calls the voice of Conscience, Gods Eccho, & how often hast thou heard it to thy terror, hath it not made many Sinners that would not hear in time, *Magor Misabib* terrors to themselves? their very hearts have meditated terror. O now souls you may sleight it, and be deaf to it, but the day is coming, it will make you hear, and be a *Bonarges* to you, it will either be a *Barnabas* (as I may say) or else a *Boanarges*, either preach Consolation, to you, or else thunder out the wrath of God, against you, untill their be no remedy. We read of the wicked man, a terrible Sound in his ears, a Sound of fears (it is read). Well poor Sinners open then to these checks and knocks betimes.

4. The Lord knocks by Corrections, and this kind

kind of knocking seems to be taken in by the Text, whom I love I Rebuke, Behold I stand at the door, and knock. When the Lord brings afflictions into our houses, he knocks at our hearts, these are loud knocks. Men sometimes knock with a Rod, as well as a hand. O how many Sinners have felt the knocks of the Rod, and yet have refused to open to the Lord Jesus! when he hath stood with his Rod, in his hand, and truly these are his last knocks, the last means he uses to get in, and if you stand out under Corrections, and afflictions, then there is little hopes of ever opening to Christ. Then the Lord says of such Persons, you revolt more, and more, why should you be smitten any more. How often hast thou said: After such an affliction, you would open and alas when God hath taken it off your Backs, have not your hearts been as hard, and as much shut, as ever? God looks that these Judgment-knocks should be heard by Sinners. There is an outward knocking by Gods hand, and an inward knocking by terrors of Conscience; therefore Afflictions are called Gods hand, whereby he knocks, and they are also called Gods stroaks, *Psal.* 32. 4. 39. 10. 11.

5. The Lord knocks by his mercies. And will neither Judgment-knocks nor mercies-knocks prevail with Sinners to open unto Christ. O what sweet and soft knocks are these, why doth he spare you, give you your lives, while he smites and cuts down others, but that he would have you open unto him? That heart must needs be hard that neither Mercy nor Judgment will soften: so certainly that heart is fast shut that neither Mercy nor Judgment will open.

Application.

Is it so that the Lord Jesus Christ knocks at the doors of poor Sinners? Then it doth inform us,

First that hearts are naturally shut against Christ. O the sadness of our naturall estates and Conditions to be shut against our best friend! When Christ comes he doth not find a way open into the heart, but he makes a way. We are like a Sepulchre with a stone rolled upon it, untill the Angel come downe, and roll it away. The stone of a hard heart is upon us, untill he sprinkle his Blood upon it, & sweetly break it, and melt it. Our hearts are compared in Scripture to an Adamant, which signifies insuperable, unconquerable; and indeed so they are, untill the great Conqueror of hearts comes to put forth his Power, to make them willing. Sinners hearts are like *Daniels Den*, a great stone was laid upon the mouth of the Den, untill the Lord took it away, according to his Promise, I will take away a heart of stone.

2. It informs us of Christs love to poor Sinners, that he should come and knock at their doors. O what love is this! why did he not pass by, and say let them alone, they are joined to Idols, why should they be knockt upon, called any more? They have refused so many formerly, I will never waite more calls on them more. Free grace breath shall not be spent in vain. O what love is this to come to the door where such a vile wretched Sinner dwells, and knock to be in. O how should this love make your hearts fly open on a sudden to think of it! That a King should come to a poor smoaky beggers cottage to entreat Lodging there!

3. It informs of Christs Condescention to poor Sinners. O what a stoop is this in the great God, to stand at the door of such vile worms as we are! is not this an unspeakable humbling of himself? as the Psalmist Expresses it. Well may poor souls cry out, What is man thou shouldst be mindfull of him, that thou shouldst magnifie him, or set thy heart upon him: That the high and lofty one of Israel, should come downe to dwell with humble, and contrite hearts.

4. It informs us, how righteous the Lord will be in shutting out poor souls from heaven, who refused to let him have enterance unto their hearts. Hath not he often knockt at the door of your hearts and you refused to open? with what face can you expect, he should let you into heaven? O he will be clear when he Judges, and justified when he speaks. It is observed (when *Paul* quotes that place out of the Psalmes) he reads it, And might overcome when thou art judged. God will overcome poor souls, will be overcome in the Court, and have not one word to say against the Lord, but just, and Righteous art thou, in all thy ways, thou art Righteous, but we are wicked, are not my ways equall, saith the Lord? the Lord will appear to your own souls, and say, is it not an equall thing, you would not let him into your hearts, that he should not let you into his heaven?

Rom. 7. 1.
Pf. 51. 4.

5. It informs us of the way of Christ, and the poor souls meeting. First Christ comes to it, he comes first, and knocks, he is the first in his motions to the soul, he is the first mover, who loved us first. O what a gross mistake is it, to think the
soul

soul first looks after Christ. I saw thee in thy blood, and said unto thee live.

The 2d. Use. I, is it so that Jesus Christ stands and knocks at the door? then it is a word of *Exhortati n* to poor souls.

First to know the knocks of Christ. The Spouse was well acquainted with his knock, that she cryed out, It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks? some take that word to be meant of knocking by afflictions, yet how ever it was her mercy, she knew Christ's voice in them. A Learned Expofitor takes this to be the Persecution of *Constantius* after *Constantines* death, when was the Church sleeping time by the great Preferments bestowed upon her, and after this came the Persecution, and Apostacy of *Julian*. Now these were Christs knocks, yet the poor Spouse knew them to have Christs voice in them. O that souls would hear the voice of the Rod he knocks withall at their doors to get in! say of the Lords Corrections, the hand seemes to be rough, and hairy, but it is *Jacobs* voice. O but it is Jesus voice, for all the hand seems to be *Esaus*'s.

Object.

How may we discern, and know the knocks of Christ?

Anfw.

1. The knocks of Christ are many times without the Creatures fore-thought, or Expectations. He comes suddenly often to knock at our doors. O what a sudden knock was that. Or ever I was aware my soul was as the Chariots of *Aminadab*. (*Hebr.* says one) I knew not before I knew, it was so unexpected, she was a Garden of nuts, before nuts for hardness. Thus it is with a poor soul; when the Lord comes to knock at the doors all on a sudden, the soul hears one knock, and starts up

as the Spouse in that Text seemsto do, It is the voice of my Beloved speaking, like one that on a sudden started up. The knocks of Christ come upon the soul, in way of surprize.

2. The knocks of Christ are powerfull. It is true they are not powerful in some, he knocks to opening in some, and not others, he knocks down all opposition, before him, as all opened before the Angel, that led *Peter* out of the Prison. Have you felt them? the knocks of Christ are felt things. Christ knockt, and O how powerfull was it to the Spouses heart. While Christ often knocks, he gives power to the souls within to open, as when he called *Lazarus*, come forth, he gave Power to obey, it is a day of Gods power, when a day of his knocking.

3. The knocks of Christ, thou maist know them, they are such knocks as stir thy soul with desires, to open. When Satan knocks, it is to sit still. Is all still within? are their no Endeavours, no desire to come to the door to open? I doubt then thy Soul knows not the knocks of Christ, for Christs knocks are Excitations to the Soul. Is there no rising to open? I rose to open to my Beloved, she knew the knock of Christ, which put her upon it.

4. The knocks of Christ awaken the soul. All within are asleep, of a dead sleep untill Christ come to knock, and the soul gets up. All are in the Bed of carnall Security, as the Spouse. O but now the soul gets up, I rose to open which argues she was now awakned, though of late asleep. What is the language of Christs knocks to a sleepy soul? awake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead,

Eph.
14. 5.

and Christ shall give thee light. How is it within? is all awake and up? though if may be thou hast not yet opened unto Christ, it argues thou hast known the knocks of Christ.

5. The knocks of Christ follow the soul. He doth not give a knock, and away, if none open to him immediatly, but he stands at the door, and knocks, as a man knocks a little, and gives over again, to see if any rise to open; if none come, then he knocks again. So doth the Lord, he knocks, O but he gives over a little, he stands at the door he is not gone, if thou open not, he will knock again, have not you found it so with you? Are not the knocks of Christ that have been at the doors of your hearts many years ago, of late come on again? O admire the Lord should give over 20. years it may be, and knock again! the knocks of the Lord follow poor souls, that he will have open to him, from Ordinance to Ordinance, and Providence to Providence, and duty to duty, and day to day.

6. The knocks of Christ are disquieting things. Poor Sinners it is a blessed mercy to have your curled peace disquieted, is all quiet within? It is to be feared the Lord Jesus knocks not there, is all at Peace? O this is a sign the strong man armed keeps the Pallace! Men that would sleep cannot endure to be disturbed, but now the knocks of Christ disturb the false peace of the Soul. Enquire now whether you know the knocks of Christ or no?

Second Branch of the Exhortation. O then poor Souls do not refuse his knocks! O stand them
not

not out as you love your souls! see that you refuse, not him that speaketh from Heaven : shift him not off (as the word is). O do not say come again to morrow, do not say, Lord, I will open to morrow, O hearken to his voice while it is day and harden not your hearts as in the day of Provocation. Heb. 3.
13.

1. Refuse not present knocks, you cannot assure, when one is past your souls shall ever have another. Who knows what to morrow may bring forth? whether the Lord may not be gone from thy door, or no, having stood so many days, nights, and months and years there already.

2. Refuse not present knocks. Every knock refused, your heart is faster bolted against Jesus Christ. The more guilt is encreased, the more is the door bolted, and O how will thy Guilt be increased, by this Refusall of Present knocks!

3. Refusing present knocks, will cause future withdrawments. I rose to open to my Beloved, but he had withdrawn himself. And for you to be the cause of these withdrawments, will weigh heavy upon your precious souls, and see what greife of soul this put her to.

4. Refuse not present knocks, they are love tokens to your precious souls, tokens of good will, how gladly he would be in. He comes like a Beloved, and Suiter at your doors and knocks to intimate to you, his great affections he hath for you, and can you find in your hearts to refuse the

the knocks of this Beloved. If he once turn his back on you, you may be long enough it may be ere he will trouble you again.

5. Refuse not present knocks. You will never forget these refusals to all eternity. O the dolefull notes that such souls will howl out and mourn out in Hell another day! This damned wretched hardheart of mine was once knockt at, nay many a time, nay many Ordinance, when I was in the land of the living, O what loud knocks did Christ give! what sweet calls under my window! at my door! but O curfed wretch that I was, and that I am, and that I shall be to all Eternity! I bolted the door against my Blessed Saviour.

6. Refuse not present knocks, it will bring on Judicall hardnes, and when the soul is under this Bolt, it is sealed for the Pit; Hardnes of heart upon the door, then it is sealed up for misery, and condemned already. Now thy Damnation sleepeeth not. Hardnes of heart, is a peace of Hell already seised upon thee. My People would have none of me, and what then? So he gave them up to their own hearts lust. Your Refusall of Christ, Sinners, will cause him to pass an act of Tradition upon you, so he gave them up, and this is but a Prodrone of your Eternal misery, a forerunner of your rejection by the Lord, to all Eternity.

3. Use. I is it so that the Lord Jesus stands, and knocks? O then it is of Caution. Take heed then of causing the Lord to cease knocking, this is the first Caution (1) Take heed of causing the Lord to pul in that hand, with which he knocks at your doors

doors. O many Sinners have done so, have Provoked the Lord to give over.

It. will be queried, when do we thus occasion the Lord to give over knocking at our hearts? *Object.*

First when we stir not, though he knocks. Who would not go away when they know, nay hear persons are within, and yet none stirs to open. O that was a sad Complaint, And none stirred up himself to lay hold of God. Would it not provoke us to call on persons and they say we come? a Servant and he says he comes, and never stir one foot before another. Thus do many poor souls with Jesus Christ, when he knocks, and calls, they say they come they come, but yet lye in the Bed of carnall ease, and Security. *Answer.*

2. When we hear not. Some are so far from stirring to open, that they hear him not knock. Our deafness may as well occasion his with drawment, as our slothfullness. What is the reason of our deafness but the hardness of our hearts? It is said of those Jews, their hearts were as adamants, and they refused to hear, and pulled away their shoulders and stopt their ears that they should not hear; therefore came upon them great wrath from the Lord of Hosts, therefore as he cryd and they would not hear. So they cryd and I would not hear, saith the Lord o' Hosts. O how sad is this to be deaf to the knocks of Correction, to the knocks of Reprehensions, to the knocks of Spirituall motions!

3. We occasion him to withdraw, when we sit down, after both hearing, and stirring, and yet we

we sit down on our seats again, as we had never heard, and never stirred. Some poor Souls heave, and stir, and come to the door, and yet go back again, never open, O this must needs be a great Provocation. They say after all this, a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands together. Thus the Spouse heard his knocks, and his calls, but made Excuses, I have put off my Coat (which says an excellent Expositor) may be taken, either of the inner coat of Sanctification, and holy duties

2. Or the outward coat of Christs Righteousness which covers both our persons, and performances. Now these were much put off, much laid aside, and how shall I put it on? O she had no mind to recollect her self and look after her lost Communion, and affection to her Beloved! and then Christ was provoked to a withdrawment.

4. We Occasion Christ to withdraw knocking, when we open a little to him, but let not our hearts stand wide open, there must be opening wide.

2. Standing open, we must open wide for this King of Glory, this is the enlarging of the heart, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Alas many souls do but half open, that Christ gets but half in, he is prest in the door: and then he will be gone, there is not room for him, to come in, (not if any man open a little, but open) and also others shut them again, they stand open no longer then an Ordinance, but they world comes or some Beloved Sin comes, and closes them again, this a great provocation to him.

5. We Occasion him to withdraw from our doors, when we indent and article with him, before we open unto him. There is a Temptation upon

upon souls at their first opening to Christ, and they see it not (*viz.*) they will article with Christ, at the door, What Terms they must have, if they open to him (I mean) when they look more at his Retinue that come along with him, than his person, more eyeing the train, than the King. Open and the King of Glory will come in. He doth not tell you of his Benefits, but of his Person, though he never comes alone, always honourably attended, yet he will have Souls refer all to him. If a King should come to a City, whose Gates were shut against him, and they indent with him, what a provocation would this be for the King to spoil them of their Charter, and priviledges, when they rebelliously shut the gates, and then conclude Article ?

6. We Occasion him to withdraw, when we do not cheerfully embrace him into our hearts. Be you lifted up you Everlasting doors, lift up your heads, O ye Gates, and it is twice in that Text. The Lord would have us open with lifted up heads, which is a posture of joy and gladness, Luk. 21. 28. Lift up your heads, Redemption draws nigh. The way to open to Christ Souls, is not to hang down your heads, in a way of legal sorrow for sin, but to come to close with him by believing, with a lifted up head, and heart, rejoycing in his tenders, of his free absolute promises.

7. We occasion him to withdraw his knocking, when we fix a note of unworthiness upon the door, to limit, or check his free access into our souls, so set up or claim up. Now such a note as this, here dwells a poor unworthy Sinner, and surely Christ will have his Guests worthy, where
he

he comes to Sup with them. Now this eclipses his free Grace, as he comes not in for thy worthiness, so he will not stay without, because of thy unworthiness. To say this in unbelief, *Lord I am not worthy thou shouldest come under my roof*, this will trouble Christ, it is he himself by coming that makes thee worthy ?

8. We may Occasion him to withdraw, by standing out, by being against opening, to him for want of Qualifications, and Preparations Will he come into an unprepared house, & heart? is this good manners to invite him into a house neither swept, nor garnished? see that case of the Infant, we read of all it's comeliness, all it's beauty, followed, upon the Lord entring into a Covenant with it. Then washed I thee with water, yet I thoroughly washed away this Blood from thee and anointed thee with oy. None of these were done before entring into Covenant, Christ makes his own Spouse beautiful, and fair, by marrying of her. The want of Qualifications, hindring closing acts of faith with Christ, is that which may cause Christ to withdraw his knocks.

2. *Branch* of the Caution is, this, not onely to take heed least we cause him to withdraw

2- Take heed if he knock at our doors, that we do not entertain groundless jealousie of Christ, which may hinder us from opening. O says the soul but I am affraid, he will not come into my soul; so much sin, so much unbelief, so much corruption lodged in my heart. O poor soul, why doth he stand then, nay knock, and call? do you think he mocks you? Would not you be ashamed, to knock at a neighbours door, and

run

run away when you have done and had no business there. Can you find in your hearts to wrong the Lord Jesus so much, as to think he hath nothing to do with that heart, at whose door he knocks. May not I say to such jealous souls: the prophet said to them, How can you live and pine away in your Iniquities? so how can live, poor souls if you pine away in your jealousies of your Deare Lord Jesus?

Thus much for the third Observation upon the Text.

We are come now to the 4th Observation we raised from the Words, Rev. 3. 20, 21.

That the Lord Jesus Christ will not refuse to enter into the vilest Sinner that opens to him, If any man open unto me, though he be never so vile, a poor wretch.

If we do but seriously ponder, and consider, who these were of whom it is spoken, it clearly convinces the point. See what sad Epithites, and Characters the Holy Ghost gives them, what can be said worse of thy soul? art thou worse, than miserable? worse than wretched? worse than blind? worse than naked? yet if any such will open to me, I will enter in, but if a poor soul should say, my case is yet worse, I am all these under Profession, and is it not this a high Aggravation of sin? so were they, yet if any of these blind, and naked professors, will open to me, then there

there are professors, yea Church members, that are wretched, and miserable souls.

John. 7.
37.

Se for the proof of this truth, that glorious word, I will in no wise cast out, those that come unto me. Here are three things in the Text, very encouraging.

1. The receiving. Such is the will of his father, and he will be faithfull to the trust the Father hath committed to him.

2. He must in no wise do it not by any means, what ever I do I must not do that.

3. Whosoever comes. The coming soul, it is not said whoever runs to me, but comes; running is a high act of faith, but coming is a low act of faith. Promises are made to the lowest act of faith. though a poor soul come but to Christ tumbling in the dust of it's own unworthiness it is welcome. He loved the world that he gave his only Begotten Son that whosoever, believes in him might not perish: whosoever, let him be the Greatest, and vilest Sinner, did not he receive gifts for men, yea for the Rebellious also?

John 3. 18.

Pl. 68. 18.

First what is meant by Opening to Christ, If any man open unto me.

First there is an Opening of the understanding, for darkness and blindness is upon the mind, and understanding, untill the Lord come and open it. Not only the door is shut, but the window is shut, as it was before the Creation; Darkness was upon the face of the deep, so it is here, till the Lord say, Let there be light. We read of the God of the world, blinding the minds of men,

2 Cor. 4. 3

First there is a natural blindness, we are all of

as spiritually born blind, and so it is said of these *Laodiceans*, they were blind, therefore we read of Christs eye-salve. Physitians despair if men be born blind, of doing them any good; but our Lord Jesus doth not so. It is storied of one of the souldiers that run at Christ with his spear, he was blind, and that the blood of Christ sprung up on his eyes, and cured him, whether that be true, or no, I know not, I am sure this is, that Christs blood is excellent eye-salve.

2. This is a judicial blindness, the Prophet *Esa* speaks of it, least they see with their eyes, now the poor creature is an idol though a Professor, *Isa. 6. 7i* he hath eyes and sees not. We read of some that *Rom. 11.* liked not to retain God in their knowledge, and *23.* so God gave them up, that their foolish hearts were darkned, but now when the heart comes to open to Christ, its opening begins here, this is one of the out rooms of the soul, this is the upper chamber of the soul, and sometimes he stays here, and gets no further, but yet the Lord begins here and lets in light into the understanding, to see the darkness and doleful state of the soul.

2. There is an opening of the will, and the affections, this is the opening of the door. We read of *I Thes. 2. 2, 10.* some that received truth, but not with love to truth: here was the understanding opened, but the will and the affections stood out, but now when light gets into the heart, we read of light shining *I Cor. 4. 6* into dark hearts, not into their heads, but hearts, as soon as it lights, then the doors of the house are opened, when the light shone about *Paul*, then he cried, What wilt thou have me to do? then the will flies open, this is called receiving Christ, *John 1. 9.* now Christ enters the soul. This receiving Christ and opening to Christ is all one, he came to his own
 G and

and his own received him not, as ye have received
Col.2.6. the Lord Jesus Christ so walk you in him.

This is the opening to him, by believing, therefore we are said to believe with the heart. Ignorance shuts Christ out of the understanding and unbelief shuts him out of the will. Now whosoever sets the will open by believing to let me in, and take possession of his soul, I will come in unto him. Faith gives the keys to Christ, as a man that takes possession hath the keys of every room given him, and he walks from room to room, so doth faith surrender up all to Christ; Christ is said therefore to dwell in our hearts by faith.

Secondly. We must inquire what is meant by Christs entring the soul, He will come in to him, &c. Where the soul opens, Christ enters.

1. He enters the heart to dwell there, not to
Isa.57.15. stay there, not only for a while, for a supper time, but to tarry, as an inhabitant in the house, not as a stranger; therefore poor humble souls are said to be Gods homes, he dwells in such, I will dwell in you. Therefore believers are said to be the
Eph.2.22. habitation of God through the Spirit, what is there you may ask in Christs entring the soul to dwell in it.

1. He is Master, where he is Possessor, as a man in his house is Master. O says a poor soul, I have many Lording and Prevailing corruptions in my heart, other Lords have dominion over you: I cannot master my pride, my passion, my presumptuous sins, O poor soul, Jesus Christ if thou open unto him, he will come in, and cast them all out: when he enters, he commands the unclean spirit to come out of the soul, he is Lord to bear rule in his own house.

2. A man in his own house gives laws and orders

ders, to be observed, so when Christ comes to enter the heart, he gives laws, then he writes his law in the heart, and the poor sinner observes his statutes, to do them. O saith the poor soul, there is a law of sin that rules and prevails, O but Jesus Christ will race out that law when he enters, he now enters as law-giver, this law now becomes the law of the inward man.

3. A man in his house loves to have all things comely and in order, so doth Christ, he will not have a disorderly house. O what confusion is there in the heart before Christ enters the soul! Nothing but disorder in the affections, and all the faculties of their soul, they being misplaced, set upon unsuitable objects, but now Christ puts all into order.

4. A man in his house loves to be at peace; not disturbed, so when Christ Jesus enters the house, he brings peace with him, when the Disciples entered they said peace be to this house, he is the King of Salem, King of Peace. 1. He commands it. 2. He creates it, He creates the fruits of the lips, Peace, Peace. O what a hell is a poor sinners heart for terror, and darkness until Christ enter it, and O then what a heaven is it, he commands it, as he commanded light to shine out of darkness, so he commands the light of comfort to shine into disconsolate and dark hearts, He said let there be light and it was so, his words are (*Verba Creativa.*)

5. A man in his house takes much delight, so when Christ enters the soul, he doth much delight in it, I will come unto him, as a token of his complacency he will sup with the poor soul, therefore his delights is with the sons of men, re-joycing in the habitable parts of the earth. 1. He 30.

delights in the prayers of the upright. 2. He de-
 Prov. 15. 8 lights in the Persons, or rather, 1. In the Persons
 11. 20. first, then their Prayers.

2. By Jesus Christs entring, and coming in, is understood, an union of friendship. The Text is an allusion to friends that have a firm union of affection one to another, and sup together, so the Lord Jesus Christ comes in as friend, to thy poor soul, it may be thou hast taken him for an enemy, but he is a friend, now communion follows union, and supping follows entring, so that here is reconciliation init, he enters, as made friends with a poor soul, that was an enemy before, he comes as one reconciled to thy poor soul, all controversies that lay twixt him and thy poor soul are taken up. We read of covenants of friendship, by eating and drinking together. So *Isaac* and *Abimelech* (*Gen. 28.*) The *Persians* used to contract friendship *inter vinum & epulas* (*Herodotus* says)

3. He comes into the soul as a bridegroom, so it notes marriage union, (it is an allusion) to the Jewish suppers. The Lord Jesus will marry that soul that opens unto him. Opening is the souls closing with Christ, Christs coming in is the Lord marrying it, and supping is the Lord communicating his love, giving to the soul his loves, so it is a marriage union betwixt the soul and Christ. Now the opening soul is the Lords *Beulah* (viz.) married to the Lord, these things are understood by his coming in.

First Reason why the Lord will not refuse to enter the vilest soul, that opens to him, because this is the will of his Father, that whosoever comes unto me, let him be never so vile, and unworthy,

Joh. 6. 36. I must not cast them of, *Whosoever believes on him*
 37. *might not perish.* The Son stands much upon the

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will of his Father; alas this is the great trust the Father hath put him upon; and as faithful to his trust, he is engaged to come off honourably, his trust is to be, the receiver of souls, that come unto him, that open to him, for coming, and believing, and opening are all one, (in the dialect of the Word), it would then be unfaithfulness in Christ, if he should refuse the opening soul. Joh. 3.18.

2. *Reason* why the Lord will not refuse to enter the vilest soul, that opens to him, because this is the end of Christs coming into the world, In the Volum of thy Book I come to do thy will, O God. Now this will was (you have heard) the receiving poor souls, therefore our Lord doth so much insist upon that, This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that believeth on the Son, should have life, he sent me for this end and purpose: We read of Christ in his Genealogy came of stained and blemished persons, and families, as *Rahab*, and *Thamar* (to note says one) Christ came of sinners, *Rahab* was an harlot, and *Ruth* a stranger, and as their husbands took them being so, so Christ hath taken to himself the Gentiles. *Ruth* was a very poor person, yet *Boaz* did not despise her for her poverty, nor for the wickedness of the countrey; no more doth Christ despise poor beggarly Gentiles, (thus another.) *He came to save sinners of whom I am chief.* Heb. 10.7
Mat. 1.3.4.
Thus Chrysostom upon it.

3. This is the Tenure of the Commission given to the Ministry of the new Testament, *Go and Preach the Gospel to every creature*, (viz.) to the worst of sinners, to poor Gentiles, which the Jews thought were not worthy of the name of men, but accounted them doggs; Yet let the Gospel be Preached to such, tell them if they will open to Christ, he will come into them, and sup

with them. The Lord you see hath laid in provision against poor sinners objections, in coming to Christ, what though you be but creatures in your apprehension, dare not, being so sensible of your own unworthiness, account your selves men, but doggs. Yea *David*, How foolish and ignorant am I, even as a beast, before thee, yet you are in the commission of the New Testament Ministry.

Rom. 5.
15, 20.

4. Jesus Christ will not refuse entring into the vilest sinner when he opens to him, because this will put a greater glory and beauty upon his grace, that where sin hath abounded even in such hearts, he should cause grace to abound, yea much more to abound. God doth not only love to give grace, but to set it off. Now how gloriously is grace set off, that Jesus Christ will come and enter, and dwell where Satan had his Throne? That where the Devil and unclean spirits took up their habitations, there Jesus Christ should take up his, may not every poor soul say in this case as he did, *I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my roof*, such a vile wretch as I have been, and enter into my heart. O how it fills the heart with admiration! Whence is this that the Mother of my Lord should come to me! so says a poor soul, of the Lord Jesus, How is it, Lord, thou shouldst manifest thy self to me, and not to the rest of the world.

Cant. 2.
14.

5. Because such poor souls see their need of closing with him, none will open unto him, but such as see their need of him, see they are undone for ever, if they miss of him, and such a conviction and frame of heart doth exceedingly take with Christ, he loves to have sinners cry out of their undone state. We read of the Spouse in the secret place of the Stairs, and yet her voice sweet. Though

Though a poor soul, be in a hole crying to the Lord for pardon, under the sense of condemnation, and a lost condition, O this is musick to Christs ear ! such a voice is sweet, and though the countenance of such a poor soul be like *Leah* all blear-eyed with tears, yet this countenance is comely in Christs eyes, for he sees not as man sees, I have heard *Ephraim* bemoaning himself, &c. God speaks of it, as much taken with it. O when your poor souls desire to open to Christ, only you cannot but cry out, Here is a wretched heart, a vile heart, an unclean house for him to come into; O this moves Christ so much the more !

Jer. 31.
18, 19.

Application.

Is it so that the Lord Jesus Christ will not refuse to enter the vilest soul, that opens to him.

1. Then it is a word of information. 1. It informs us that the grace of Christ is free, if he would enter into such souls. O poor sinners nothing will sooner make the doors of your hearts fly open, than the discoveries of free grace, this will be as oyl to the chariot wheels of your affections, this is the oyl of myrrh. Christ when he puts his hand in at the hole of the door, leaves some myrrh upon the handles of the lock, which makes the soul rise from its bed of sloth, to open to Christ, as it did the Spouse; this makes the soul like the chariots of *Aminadab*, or ever you were aware, this is the sword that is anointed with balsome when it smites; poor sinners, it wounds, and heals all at the same time.

Cant. 5.
5, 6.

2. It informs us how clear the Lord Jesus will be, in the condemning of non-opening souls. Will not the Lord say to such, thy destruction, and damna-

tion is of thy self? I knockt, but thou wouldest not open, and are not you herein inexcusable O sinners, who have stood out so many knocks of Christ?

3. It informs us of the mistakes of many poor souls, that cry out Christ will not open to them, they are so vile, and so wretched, if any man open to me, let him be what he will, if he open once, can you be worse than these *Laodiceans*?

Object:

O but says a poor soul, my case is worse than a poor sinners case at first, I thought once I had opened to Christ, and closed with Christ, but now upon close search, and scrutiny, I find it other wise.

Ans:

Poor soul! so it was with this Church, they were under great mistakes of their conditions, as any of you can be, thou sayest thou hast need of nothing, and she had need of every thing, she set a greater rate of herself, than the market of Christ afforded her, yet Christ would not refuse to enter into such souls.

Object:

O but says another poor soul, I am so dead hearted, and lukewarm in the things of God, I have no life, nor zeal for Christ, I find my heart stand neuter in the things of Christ.

Ans:

O poor soul so it was with this poor Church, thou art neither hot, nor cold, I will therefore spue thee out of my mouth, yet Christ was at her door, and calls to get in.

Object:

O but says another poor soul, come into me? I have no entertainment for Christ, I am poor, here's nothing for Christ, but a poor wretched soul, art thou sensible of thy poverty?

Ans:

Such a people were these *Laodiceans*, Thou art poor, then she had no entertainment for Christ, no he expects nothing but opening, he brings his own

own cheer along with him, I will sup with him, he comes to entertain thee, and thus I might go over all your Objections.

Second Use. Then it is a word of Counselland Exhortation to poor sinners, to open to Christ, if he will not refuse to enter, do not you refuse to open. O that you now would beg for the keyes of *David*, to be turned in your hearts ! that they might not only be open, but stand open, that no man might shut them: but this use was prosecuted at larg upon the first Doctrine, I will therefore wave it now.

Third Use is a word of Encouragement to the worst of sinners, to open to Christ, if any man will open unto me.

First Encouragement. Though you be filthy, and all in the gore blood of your pollutions, yet there is a fountain opened, for you, for sin, and for uncleanness to wash in, (for uncleanness that separates from the Camp) Is not this great encouragement to hear of cleansing virtue flowing from Christ? Zach. 13. 1

O but says a poor soul, I am such an unclean wretch, as you think not of, well, the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and unrighteousness for all that.

2. The Fountain, is open, no bar upon it, it is not a Fountain cealed, open to all Travellers, all comers.

3. It is not a stream, but a Fountain, here's water enough, grace enough to cleanse.

2. Encouragement to the vilest of sinners, to open, he never refused any for their vileness, nor received any for their worthiness. Have not as vile as thee found mercy ? what art thou worse than *Paul* ? who was a Blasphemer, what worse than a Blasphemer ? (in the Hebr.) a Blasphemer (as 1 Tim. 1. 13.
one

one observes) is said (*transfigere nomen Jehovah*) to strike through the name of *Jehovah*, yet such an one found mercy, an injurious Person, a contumacious Person, (so the word signifies) or a Railer, what worse than such an one, nay a Persecutor, such an one as made havock of the Church, persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it Gal. 1. 13. The word *Persecutor* is taken from a word (that signifies to pursue) as a Dog or an Hound doth his game, then *Paul* was a bloodhound, always following his scent against the poor Church, see but what a Persecutor he was. 1. He was a Volunteer in it, some are put upon it, either by force, or to curry favour, He desired of them Letters. 2. He doth not spare either Sex, men or Women. 3. He was for binding them, he puts this in his Commission, That he might bring them bound. 4. He went so far as he shut them up in Prison. 5. When they were put to death he gave his voice against them. 6. Such an one as was at the execution of *Stephen*, They laid down their clothes at a young mans feet called *Saul*. 7. Nay such an one as compelled them to blaspheme, which still was an higher measure of sinning; who would now have thought but this was a firebrand of hell? Here was one ripe for eternal ruine, and yet this soul was a vessel of mercy, a chosen vessel, as he is called, to bear Gods name, this soul obtained mercy, or was bemercied, (as the word imports) he was plunged in mercy, as a man in a river over head and ears. Well then see what a monument of free grace, *Paul* was, and art thou worse than *Paul*?

3. Encouragement to poor vile sinners to open to Christ, your sense of vilness is that which moves Christ to bowels towards you. O when *Ephraim*

was

was bemoaning what a wretch he was, what a vile creature, how stubborn, how rebellious, how brutish, then God breaks out, My bowels are troubled for him, &c. Your bemoanings are musick to Christ, *Lacryma poenitentium* (says one) *est vinum Angelorum*, so we may say of the tears of poor sinners, he bottles them up, Are not my tears in thy bottle? He that hath bottles for your tears, hath bowels for your souls.

4. Encouragement. Christs errand from Heaven to Earth, was for such: he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, even *Publican* sinners (for that Text speaks of such) to repentance: And shall poor souls, believe that Christ will not deliver this errand, and do his errand. 1. His Father sent him, therefore he will do it, This is the will of him that sent me, &c. 2. It is an errand that he was as willing to, as the Father that sent him — Mine ear hast thou bored, he was as willing to it, as an Israelitish servant was to stay with his old master, who had his ear bored, (that is the Metaphor.)

3. It is an errand Angels attended him in, The Cherubims looked door to the mercy seat, which typed out the Angels attending Christ as Mediator (says a learned Expositor) they honoured Christ in such a glorious Embassie as being his Train and Retinue.

4. It is an errand designed from all Eternity, that the Lord Jesus Christ should have mercy on the vilest soul, that opens to him. The Eternal purposes of the Father do run out to sinners in Christ; therefore we read of a Council of Peace between them both, betwixt God the Father, and Christ; This errand and embassie was agreed upon, at the Council-Table of Heaven from all Eternity.

5. It

Isa. 53.
11.

5. It is an errand the Lord took much pleasure in, The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, &c. Therefore he tells us, This is his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased.

5. Encouragement, to the vilest sinners to open to Christ, where and when such have opened to Christ, they have been more than ordinary persons, they have many times out-shined others.

1. Such many times are great comforters of afflicted consciences, thus *Paul*, what an eminent binder up of bleeding consciences did he prove? A man that hath had the Gout and Stone, can pity those that lie sick of those diseases. *M. Perkins* that great binder up of souls, we read what he was before conversion, and also godly *M. Bolton*, who writ that piece, *Cures for afflicted Consci-*

Luk. 7-37.

ces. 2. Such prove to out-shine others in their love to Christ, when they once open, *Mary* loved much, why much was forgiven her, what expressions are here to set out her love. 1. Stood at his feet. 2. Behind him. 3. Weeping: 4. Did wash his feet with tears. 5. Wiped them with the hair of her head. 6. Kissed his feet. 7. And anointed them with oyl. O what love was here? Now who was this *Mary*? a Woman says the Text, who was a sinner, a strumpet, yet when this soul opened to Christ, what a famous soul she proves. 3. Such out-strip others many times in godly sorrow, we read in this great instance of *Maries* weeping. O when such take a true measure of the dimension of their sins, by the unerring rule of the word, they cannot but go out, as *Peter* did, and weep bitterly. Usually great sinners, are great mourners: *Mary* was a great sinner, but yet she was a great mourner. 4. Such many times out-strip others in eminent service for

for Christ, thus *Paul*, I labour more than you all. You know we read what dangers and difficulties he went through, and all for his testimony on the behalf of that Jesus he once persecuted. 5. They many times out-strip others in the discoveries of the love of God to their souls, for as their humiliations are great, so are their manifestations: he that lays his foundation low, it argues he intends to build high, so when God intends to raise high in point of comfort, he lays low in point of casting down. 6. They many times out-strip others in perseverance, they usually hold on, when they begin to profess, as it was said of that ground that had no root, it withered away; *but souls that have a rooted work, they root deep, laid in humiliation for sin they often hold out best.*

Rev. 3. ver. 20.

We have now finished the part which is the Counsel of Christ, to open to him: we are now come to the second part of the Text which is the promise.

1. *I will come into him, here is Union.*
2. *I will sup with him, here is Communion.*

An allusion to the marriage Suppers of the Jews. Jesus Christ would communicate his love, to such poor souls, &c.

Observation is,

That Jesus Christ where he enters he sups, I will sup with him.

We must inquire what is meant by Christs supping with a poor soul?

1. By Supping is implied Communion, it is a

sea-

season of Communion, when friends are together at supper, then they have Communion together, we read it shadowed out to us in the supper of the Kings Son, when the King came in among the guests, I will sup with them, though it be evening time, with them, supper comes up in the evening, and I will then come and give up my presence, and will maintain sweet communion with them. There must needs be sweet communion when Christ sits at the Table: When the King sits at the Table, the Spikenard gives forth a pleasant smell. The King is Christ, His sitting at the Table is maintaining sweet communion with his people. The Spikenard is the preaching of the word, which when the King sits at the Table of his Ordinances, they smell sweetly to poor believers, and also to God himself, for then he smells a sweet savour of rest in our Applications to him, as the Spikenard, *Mary* at supper did pour upon Christ, filled the house, so doth Christ fill the souls of his people. If it now shall be asked what communion is this that is supper communion with souls that open to Christ?

Cant. I.
12.

Joh. 12.
3, 4.

1. It is the Communion of the whole Trinity, at the Table, with a poor Believer. This Text speaks
- 1 Joh. 1. 3. it of Christ, but also we read of the fellowship, we have with the Father, Truly our fellowship, our society (so the word also signifies) is with the Father. God the Father, doth not despise society
- 2 Cor. 13. with poor souls; we also read of the fellowship and Communion of the Holy Ghost, O what
14. Communion would this be, the Father hath Communion with us in love, the Son in grace, the Spirit in the application of these, therefore we read
- Rom. 5. 5. of the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts through the spirit, &c. O how comfortable would

this Communion make your lives. Eating and drinking together was the ancient badg of intimate fellowship, therefore thus set out by a Supper.

2. It is a Communion that is founded upon, and grows up out of union, 1. I will come into him, here is union, 2. Sup with him, here is Communion; but no Union, no Communion, if there be no in-dwelling, there is no discovery, which glorious truth we find set out by various Metaphors (in the word) sometimes by Head and Members, by Root, and Branches, by Man, and Wife, all which notes a Communion, grounded upon Union. O then Believers look to your Union.

3. It is mutual Communion, so all the former Metaphors illustrate, so is the Communion betwixt head, and members, &c. So here in my text I will sup with him, and he with me.

4. It is a spiritual Communion betwixt Christ, and the spirits of his guests, he breathes his spirit upon them and they send up the breathings of that spirit back again to him, a Communion of spirits, their hath been (with some notionists) a great talk of Communion with Angels, but this is a certain truth, there is a Communion betwixt Christ, and the spirits of his people, not a Communion of expressions nor a Communion of gifts, nor a Communion of affections only, but of spirits.

5. It is a satisfying Communion, 1. To Christ, he is sometimes said to be satisfied, as a man that is hungry, and eats heartily, is satisfied, so Christ even hungers after Communion with his people, therefore it is called his supping with them, he shall see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied. 2. Satisfying to Believers Communion with Christ, supping with Christ, O how satisfying, it is to a poor hun-

hungry soul! you hunger to sup with Christ, and
 Psal. 36. 8. Christ hungers to sup with you, and both parties
 shall be satisfied, they shall abundantly be satisfi-
 ed with the fatness of thy house, viz. in Commu-
 nion with him. We read of the meek eating, but
 Psal. 22. shall they be satisfied, yea that they shall, says
 latter end.

6. This Communion with Christ, is a Commu-
 nion that causes burning, and longing of soul, after a
 more full fruition of his presence. After the soul
 hath once suppt with Christ, it longs to be bidden
 again; if you once have tasted, how gracious the
 1 Pet. 2. 4. Lord is, you will come unto him, as unto a living
 stone: your supping, and sitting down with him now,
 is but a prologue to your sitting down with him in
 his Fathers Kingdom, and your sitting down with
 Saints in Communion here, is but to set forth your
 sitting down with *Abraham*, and *Isaac* and *Jacob*
 Mat. 8. 11. in the Kingdom of God.

2. In this supping with Christ, there is not only
 Communion, but also communication, and so the
 word Communion sometimes signifies, noting the
 benefit of Communion, Christ at supper communi-
 cates to his guests, I sate under his shadow; here
 Cant. 2. 3. was the spouses communion with Christ, yea with
 great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my tast,
 here is Christs communication. 1. Christ at the
 Table communicates his love, these communicati-
 on I call his supper discoveries, as friends discover
 their affections, one to another, by bidding them
 eat, and bidding them welcome, so doth Christ
 say to poor souls, as the Angel did to the poor
 weary Prophet, Arise and eat, he bids them eat,
 O friends or O neighbour; Christ speaketh, as at a
 feast, chearing up his friends as partakers with him
 of the graces, and comforts he had communicated
 the

the spices, he gathered, were first of his communication, drink abundantly O my Beloved, be drunken *viz.* be plentifully filled with loves. We read of the Lords communications, of himself set forth under the nation of a feast, In this mountain will I make a feast of fat things, which feast holds out to us the discoveries of his love in the Gospel, the Gospel is set out by all dainties, that poor souls might hunger, and thirst after them, Come buy wine and milk, without mony, without price.

Cant. 5. 1.

Isa. 25. 6.

Isa. 55. 1.

2. He will not only communicate his love to such, as open to him, but he will communicate his grace; for communion sometimes is rendered by participation, he will then make such partakers of his graces. As grace, is exercised in ordinances, so grace is bestowed in them. While the King sits at the Table, the spiknard gave forth a pleasant smell. Grace is now exercised upon its right objects, he by his presence doth give grace, and draw it forth.

Cant. 1. 12

3. He will not only in this supper communicate his grace, but he will communicate his benefits, His fruits were sweet unto my tast, *viz.* His benefits of his death, and suffering. He calls the soul at this supper, that his righteounes is his to pardon it, and that he died for his remission, We have remission of sins through his blood. Here might I bring in all the benefits of Christ, as so many dishes, that are served up to hungry souls at this supper.

Cant. 2. 3.

1. Pardon of sin, he communicates this to you at this supper, O are not your souls hungry for this! when doth he seal souls, but at these supper times?

Isa. 2. 7. 4.

2. Reconciliation to God, this is another dish in this supper, he communicates to poor souls, lets them see how he hath taken up the controversie

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betwixt

betwixt God and man! and that Fury is not in him.

3. Power against sin, this is another benefit, and dish, which comes in at this supper. When he comes in, he brings power with him.

4. Perseverance, this is another benefit. If he sup with believers there, they shall not miss of supping with him hereafter, &c. This supper strengthens them to persevere, notwithstanding all the difficulties they meet with in their ways.

4. He communicates himself, at this supper, My flesh is meat, indeed, and my blood, is drink indeed, He is the bread that came down from Heaven. Faith feeds upon Christ himself, not the promise alone but Christ in the promise, Christ in the ordinance, Christ in the duty, until we do this, we content our selves with huskes, and shes, for Christ only is the kernel of every ordinance, and duty, (*non tua sed te*) not thine but thee, is the believers motto waiting upon God. Whom do I desire on earth in comparision of thee?

First Reason Why doth Christ promise to the opening soul, He will come, and sup with it? because such souls are hungry for his supper, and therefore he communicates himself to the poor souls; therefore we read, have many gracious promises, as the healing waters of the sanctuary, run to poor hungry souls. Canst thou say and say truly, Thy soul is hunger bitten for Christ, O poor soul all things are ready for thee in the promise, I may alude to that all things are ready, the supper is coming up all this while, it is prepared for thee in the promise, only it is thy work to wait for it, being set upon the Table, He will fill the hungry with good things, nay with goodness it self, (sure that is with himself) yea, and he will fill it too, he satisfieth the

the longing soul, the desirous soul, (some read it the running soul) O see what an especial care he hath of the hungry in his family ! blessed hunger is this ; blessed are they that hunger, and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled. in Heb. 3.
6. is the
running
soul.
Mat. 5. 6.

2. Why, Christ will sup with opening souls, because he knows his supper will be sweet to such. O how sweet are the discoveries of his love, to a poor hungry soul ! his fruits are sweet to their taste, there is nothing of Christ, but it is sweet to a gracious soul, my Beloved is unto me a bundle of myrrh ; myrrh is a bitter thing, and notes afflictions, yea not one affliction but a bundle, yet he shall ly betwixt my breasts all night. The fruits of the Rod of Christ are sweet. Now Christ loves to have Believers his Guests, My beloved is as a cluster of Cyprus, a certain plant, which bringeth forth a sweet smelling gum, like unto a flourishing vine branch, therefore called a cluster (say some) but when was this ? it was so when the King was at his Table with his guests about him, the Saints are said to come about him. Dost thou find sweetness in Communion with Christ in ordinances, which are the dishes at Christ supper ; O poor soul Christ will love to communicate himself to thy soul. Cant. 1. 13

3. Christ will sup with opening souls, because he will have his guests, have foretaste of their eternal supping with him.

This supper is an emblem of Heaven, when Christ shall sup with them, and they with him, to all eternity, and by this supper, he causeth souls to long for Heaven. If a little be sweet here, what will Christ be hereafter ? if a taste be so sweet, what will more ? if a drop be so sweet, what will the ocean be ? if the first fruits then be so sweet, what will the whole harvest be ? if a beam be so reviving, what

then will the Sun be ? if a stream what then will a Fountain be ?

4. Christ will sup with opening souls because they have waited long, and expected his supper to come up, it may be thou hast waited all the day, until evening, it is now evening, then it will be supper time presently. In the evening of thy life comes up Christs supper, he will not fail a poor waiting soul. The expectation of the power shall not perish, wait still, poor soul, it is all this while setting up.

Application.

Is it so that Christ will come in, and sup with an opening soul, then it is *first* a word of Trial, whether souls have opened to Christ, or not, that souls may know what their conditions are, as to their eternal estates, whether they may plead this, with Christ, as a promise, Lord I have opened unto thee, and thy promise runs so, and so, to such poor souls &c.

1. How is all within ? put that Question to thy own soul, Is all alive within ? where Christ comes he brings life with him, he speaks life, the words of eternal life are with him, now soul know thy state, whether dead, or alive God ward, if thou hast opened to Christ, thou art made alive, thou art not content with a name to live, but thou art really enlivened, When Christ comes into a soul, he findes all dead, You who were dead in sins and trespasses, hath he quickned. Thou canst now say as he did, this I know, before I was dead, and now I am made alive, I was blind, but now I see. Can you remember, how you once lay (as is said in that case) In time past you were no people, but now a people, can you remember,

Eph. 5. 1.

1 Pet. 2.
10.

remember, how in time past you lay rolling, and stinking in the grave of your lust, and undone condition? and you were without any breathings after God, any desire after Christ, but Christ came, and breathed the breath of life into you, and then you stood up from the dead, it is a good argument you have opened to Christ. When the great Prophet came, and spread himself upon the dead Child, it opened its eyes, and looked up, so when Christ comes in an ordinance, or in a promise, to spread himself upon a poor soul, then his closed heart, and eyes are open, the soul now looks up, is not set upon the Table for the dead, but for the living. Christs guests, are all living souls.

2. Is all awake within? it is true, the Church of *Laodicea* was rather asleep, than dead (so one takes the Text) I stand at the door and knock, viz. by my exhortations that thou may be awakened and stirred up with my gracious calls, and knocks, well soul is all awake within? Then thou hast opened, for Christ in the soul keeps us from sleeping. 1. As he enlightens it. Light will hinder sleep, 2. As he excites, he will not let the soul alone, always jogging of it, pulling of it, moving it.

3. Hath all been troubled within? It is said when the strong man armed keeps the pallace, his Goods Luke. 11. are in peace, but when Christ comes, he makes an 13. invasion, now all is in a hurry, and confusion, for the present in an invasion, thus it is with thy soul, (an uproar, or tumult in *Jerusalem* where Christ was born) come, come poor soul, thy troubles speak Christ within, Satan would not be so busy else about thee.

2. If thou hast opened to Christ, Christ is become precious to thy soul. He is precious to such as believe Pet. 1. 2. 7

believe. I told you believing is opening, and *Peter* tells us to such is he precious (or honourable) is the Lord Jesus so to thee? is he so in his promises? in his titles, in his worship, in his Saints, in his offices, in his graces? are not his ointments savoury, and precious to thy soul? if thou canst account him as a Pearl of Price, thou hast opened to him.

3. If thou hast opened unto Christ, thou hast then received whole Christ? receiving Christ, and opening to him are the same, As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ so walk you in him, here is Christ in all his offices, 1. Prophetical office. Hast thou put thy soul under the Teachings of the great Prophet? 2. As a Priest, to intercede, and offer up thy sacrifices for thee. 3. For thy Lord to Rule it, and King it over thy corruptions, as the King of Glory hast thou opened to him?

1 Kings
19. 12. 13.

4. If thou hast opened unto Christ, thou hast heard his voice? If any man hear my voice, and open unto me. Hearing his voice was before opening. Can not you remember you heard a still and small voice in a promise? which made you do as the Prophet did, when he wrapt his face in a mantle. Hast thou gone home from an Ordinance, and wrapt thy grace in a mantle, and mourned before the Lord? and said how is it Lord, Thou shouldst manifest thy self to me, and not the rest of the world? Every one that hath heard of the Father comes unto me (*viz.*) opens unto me. You hear and hear but you do not hear of the Father, you hear of Ministers but not of the Father.

Jho. 6. 45.

5. If thou hast opened unto Christ, then thou art a mourning soul for his presence; Thus did the Spouse when Christ had withdrawn himself, she could not live without him, therefore inquires every where, in the broad streets, publique ordinances,

dinances, and in the narrow lane of more retired meetings. Alas there are many souls that can't tell, when Christ is present, and when absent, surely such never opened to Christ.

6. If thou hast opened to Christ, thou wilt not be at rest, till thou hast found him after withdrawalment. I charg you O Daughters of *Jerusalem*, tell him I am sick of love, I am wounded with love (so some read it) To be wounded with love, is to open to Christ, and O the wounded soul runs up and down, saw you whom my soul loves, nothing but the object can satisfy the love-sick soul.

7. If thou hast poor soul opened to Christ, thou desirest to open more, thou desirest more room may be made in thy heart for Christ, when thou shalt enlarge my heart &c: Open thy mouth wide, this is widening of the heart for more of Christ. A little would have more, if you have tasted how ^{1 Pet. 2. 3.} gracious the Lord is, then you would come unto him, as unto a living stone. Though nature (we say) be satisfied with a little, yet grace is not. How could a soul desire more of Christ, if it had not opened unto him at all. There can be no desiring after an unknown good, the opening of the soul, consists much in desires.

Second Use. Is it so that Christ will sup with all opening souls, then it is a word of *Information*, it informs us then, of the misery that refusing to open to Christ brings upon poor souls. Was not that a sad word to those poor souls, who were invited, but refused to come? and the Master of ^{Luke 14. 21.} the feast was angry, and said, Go quickly into the streets, not only in broad streets, but lanes of the City, why who lives there? The poor, the blind; O the poor dark lanes and allies, he will

have them sought out, and what becomes of the invited guests ! O sad they shall not taste of my supper, might they say, Lord let us have a taste, if not so much as others, yet Lord a taste, O no ! not taste of it, this is wrath to the height, alas poor souls they made light of it, O poor souls, you will be as miserable beggars excluded from this great supper, you your selves thrust out. An allusion to Beggars that stand without, where some great marriage supper is served up.

1. You have no right to his supper here. We read of some who had no right to eat, which serve at the Law and Tabernacle, then all may not eat; The Paschal Lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, you that never eat sour herbs, never supped with Christ. Christ brings sweet meats at last, but he brings bitter herbs at first, you that are all for the sweet meats of sin, you have no right to eat of the Evangelical Paschal Lamb.

2. You have no right to the supper in Glory hereafter. Do you think he will have room for such guests as you ? You read of a guest that had not on the wedding Garment, and was cast out, such will be cast out here, and kept out hereafter.

Third Use. Is it so that Jesus Christ will sup with all opening souls, then it is a word of *Exhortation*. 1. Then get Appetites, if Christ will sup with you, (we read of some) that were invited to the supper, but they had no Appetites, what was the matter ? one went to his Farm, the World did choke their Appetites, as men in a surfeit have a loathing of food, they had got a desperate surfeit, and they now had no stomach to their food, O then hunger after Christs Supper.

2. Wait for Christs Supper coming up, though it doth not at present come up, O poor soul, be not

not fretfully impatient, and fling away, and say with him, why should I wait upon the Lord any longer? A poor necessitous Beggar will tarry until the alms come, and be glad of it then too,

1. It will come up, when he thinks best. It is his own supper, and therefore let him take his own time 2. It shall come up when you need it most, O then it will be most welcome!

3. Then be ready for Christs supper. We read of the marriage of the Lamb, and his wife hath made herself ready, now her readines it was granted to her, to be clothed in white, (*viz.*) The righteounes of Christ, upon the back of thy soul, is thy readines for Christs supper. We read of going into the marriage supper, and none went in with him, but such as were ready. When one goes to supper to a friends house, they will not go unready.

Rev. 19. 7.

8.

Mat. 25.

10.

4. If Christ will sup with poor opening souls, then content not your selves with being among the guests, and sitting at the Lords Table, without seeing the King at it. I am afraid many sit at the Table, that do not enjoy the Kings presence, and they may say, to your own souls, as he did, What doth all this avail me? so long as I see not the Kings presence. What is the reason they profit not by Ordinances? Ordinances do not perfume their souls? do not sweeten them, the King is not at the Table.

5. Is it so that the Lord Jesus will sup with opening souls? then believe it, and expect it. O plead this blessed promise, let it stay thy heart, when ready to faint, still hold this conclusion. That Christs supper will come up, sooner or later. The misery of souls is they are fit to conclude it will never come up but because it doth not come up when they would have it.

Obiect.

O But says a poor soul, why doth the Lord defer so long? If he intend to sup with me, I have waited in ordinances, so long, and so long, and yet he doth not communicate his love to my poor soul?

1. Christ is late with his supper, that poor souls might be led into that excellent mystery of living by faith, that they might live a life of dependance upon Christ for all his communications. Children would always sit down at the Table with their Father, but if you did so, there would not be that excellent use for faith, that is right noble faith, to believe for a mercy, in the want of it. Blessed is he that believes and sees not.

2. Christ defers his supper, that all his Guests may have the better appetites, he loves to see his Guests feed, eat, and drink abundantly, as *Labans* delay did enflame *Jacobs* affection to *Rachel*, so doth Christ delay to sup with poor souls, it causes there appetites to grow stronger after himself, and the communications of his love.

3. Christ defers his Supper, that he might hide pride from them, he loves to have all his Guests sit low, this is Christs Rule, when thou art bidden, sit in the lowest room &c. Then it shall be honour to thee, to ascend higher, alas, if Christ supper should come up soon, we should grow wanton, and proud, we should be exalted above measure. as *Manna* had a worm in it, if it was kept too long so may this hidden *Manna* through our corruption, if it be enjoyed too soon.

4. Christ defers his supper, that he may exercise the patience of his Guests, to see how they will carry it, for he is greatly in love with the exercise of grace, he loves a waiting frame of spirit, and it may be said in *Temptations*, and *Desertions*

desertions, as well as Persecutions, Here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints, Then Faith appears to be Faith, for it is the evidence of things not seen.

5. Christ defers his Supper, that they may prize it more, and keep the taste of it longer, we read of *Job* prizing the word above his appointed food. O the longer it is a coming up, the more you prize it when it comes, when God hath kept a mercy a long time from a poor soul, then the soul grows more and more in love with it, under the want of it, and also this is the way to keep the taste of it upon your soul. You will after so many Prayers, and so many Tears, truly you will never lose the taste of it, the longer it was before you obtained it, the faster will you hold it, so did the Spouse by Christ.

Fourth Use. Is it so that the Lord Jesus Christ will sup with all opening souls? then it is of Caution. 1. Take heed you go not any way before it come up, that you be not weary of waiting for it. A poor soul may wait till a mercy be just ready to come, and then give over, this is sad. Thus did *Saul* for *Samuel*. Thus in publick cases I will wait upon the Lord until he arise and have mercy upon *Zion*, wait for the great supper at Christs Exaltation, Gather your selves together to the supper of the great God, and see the cheer, and entertainment of that supper, then will that word of the Lord be fulfilled, *And they shall go forth* Isa. 66. 15. *and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me;* You may lose your share in this supper, and truly it will be blessed sitting at this Table

Fifth Use, is a word of Comfort to poor opening souls, if Christ will sup with such, then it is of great comfort. 1. There

1. There is comfort in this, the food at the supper is unperishable food. Labour after meat that never perishes, but endures to everlasting life. This food you will in the strength of it not only go to mount *Horeb*, but to mount *Zion*. He that eats of the bread that came down from Heaven, shall never die. This supper is the sealing supper to eternal life and glory, O then poor soul rejoyce in this supper.

2. There is comfort in this supper, Christ doth not stand upon his points with his guests. You see who they were that were called in, such as were in the High-ways. 1. Either Beggars which haunt the High-ways. 2. Desperate sinners, poor Gentiles that were by the High-ways, High-way sinners, O who would think Christ would sit at the Table with such, as these poor *Laodiceans*. We have an excellent piece of History, to which I may allude in this case, *Mephibosheth* a poor lame man, O says *David*, he shall eat at my Table continually, O how did this take him. So saith Christ to poor lame sinners, they shall eat at my Table, What such Dogs at the Table? O what condescension is this in the King? It is storied of one King, that when his Dogs were wounded, would sit down and dress the wounds himself, we are the Dogs, Christ the King, our wounds are our sins, his blood is the salve by which he heals them.

3. There is comfort in this supper, all the enemies in the world cannot mar or hinder this feast, none here can take it away. This is the joy that the Lord Jesus gives that no man can take away, Christ will still sup with his People, he can sup with his in Prison, in Poverty, in a Dungeon, in Banishment, in the secret Places of the Stairs, he
came

came and suppt with *Paul* and *Silas*, they could not have been so merry else, They sung in the stocks, &c.

4. There is comfort in this supper, it will strengthen you against all Temptations. When Christ feasts with a soul, he lays in against Temptations, Thus he gave *Paul* a glorious treatment before he had his messenger of Satan, to buffet him. Usually Temptations are near when we have been at supper with Christ, Satan envies you the happiness of sitting at Christs Table, and therefore he labours to cloud all with an after Dish of his own preparing, O this a strengthening supper?

5. There is comfort in this supper, you will have comfortable conference at the Table. The Table-discourse of Christ, must needs be sweet discourse, his (*mensalia colloquia*) are worthy of recording in the register of your experiences. He is not silent at the Table, what if one be silent at his Table, his words cause them that are asleep to speak. A poor dull sleepy soul, he will open its mouth, by his sweet discourses. If it hold true Ministerially much more of Christ, Christs Table talk hath refreshed many a soul.

6. There is comfort in supping with Christ, you have honourable attendance, Angels themselves attend the Table, These glorious Courtiers always attend the King. Where the King is, there is the Court. They are Ministring Spirits, to the heirs of salvation, They are Servitors to Saints.

A Word of Direction. Would you be at supper with Christ, and sit at his Table?

1. Then get on the wedding Garment. He that had not on the wedding Garment, was not suffered to continue with the Guests, after the King came in. When the Prodigal came home the best
Robe

Robe, was put upon him, and then came up the feast. There we read of the cheer of the fatted Calf, &c. You must not think in the Rags of your own righteousness to sit at Christs Table. The *Pharisees* were not his Guests but the Poor *Publicans*.

2. Would you sup with Christ? O then labour after more love to Christs person, not only to his benefits, which we have, but Christs person. Friends that love will be supping together sometimes.

3. Would you sup with Christ? then get into Communion with Saints. Where doth Christ feast, but in the mountain? In this mountain will I make a feast of fat things, get into the Lords house. His Churches are his Banqueting houses, his wine cellar, where he gives his loves, though it is true Christ, may sup and will sup with gracious souls, yet you may miss much of the comfort of his supper, by not getting into his Family in closer Communion, there are many promises made to this station, and many souls have not tasted of that hidden *Manna* of assurance, untill they have come into the Communion of the People of God.

4. Would you sup with Christ? let not your Desires after comfort hinder your pursuit after holiness, He that hath my Commandments, and Keepeth them, I will love him and will sup with him, which is a great piece of Christs supper.

5. Would you sup with Christ? then make sure of opening to him, If any man open unto me, Can you expect he will sup with you when your hearts are bolted and shut against him? After closing with Christ comes supping with Christ.

Another Use is this, hath Christ suppt with any of your souls, O then blefs, the Lord ! live in the Return of thanks, shew not your selves unkind, have you sit at the Table with Christ ? O now then Learn duty from hence.

1. Be much in Blessing him.
2. Admire his condescention as *Mephibosheth* did *Dauids*, Is thy servant a dead dog ? how is it Lord, thou should manifest thy self to me, and not to the rest of the world ?
3. Live answerably to your supper-priviledges of Communion and Communication.
4. Walk humbly with God, be not proud of your sitting at the Table with the King.
5. Improve your Tasts of Christ supper against Satans Temptations, tell Satan yow know, what it is to tast of Christs supper, and therefore you will go on in your Pilgrimage, rejoycing untill you cometo sit down at his Table in the Kingdom of Glory.

FINIS.